SHINING LIGHT ON THE DARKNESS: THE CREATION OF A FOCUS GROUP TO ADDRESS HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN EDISON, NEW JERSEY

David B. Trawick

BA, Rutgers University, 1984
MDiv, New York Theological Seminary, 2002

Mentors

Donald Hilliard Jr., DMin
Christopher Michael Jones, DMin

A FINAL PROJECT SUBMITTED TO
THE DOCTORAL STUDIES COMMITTEE
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Dayton, Ohio
May 2025

Copyright © 2025 by David B. Trawick
All rights reserved

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT iv

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS v

INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER

1. MINISTRY FOCUS 5
2. BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS 24
3. HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS 43
4. THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS 63
5. INTERDISCIPLINARY FOUNDATIONS 82
6. PROJECT ANALYSIS 100

APPENDIX

A. PRE-SURVEY RESULTS 125
B. JOURNAL ENTRIES 130
C. POST-SURVEY RESULTS 147

BIBLIOGRAPHY 152

ABSTRACT

SHINING LIGHT ON THE DARKNESS: THE CREATION OF A OCUS GROUP TO ADDRESS HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN EDISON, NEW JERSEY

by
David B. Trawick
United Theological Seminary, 2025

Mentors

Donald Hilliard Jr., DMin
Christopher Michael Jones, DMin

A focus group was organized from my context, New Life Church, on sex and labor trafficking in Edison, New Jersey. The problem statement is that members in my context were unaware that trafficking exists in our town. My hypothesis is that after several educational sessions, we should foster involvement from the group in addressing human trafficking within the township. If successful, this approach could provide a model for expanding education efforts to the broader community. I will measure my hypothesis by the amount of participation in community anti-trafficking efforts, such as a task force.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to thank my wife, Gwendolyn, who has been the wind beneath my wings. She has been supportive of me throughout the whole doctoral program, especially for this project. I would also like to thank my ministry context, New Life Church. Though small in number (currently), they are large in heart and support. Many thanks go to my professional associates, who have been an invaluable part of this process. I would also like to thank Dr. Donald Hilliard Jr. and Dr. Christopher M. Jones, my mentors for this program. They have supported me, believed in me, and stood with me every step of the way. And, of course, I would like to thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who alone deserves the glory.

INTRODUCTION

I have discovered that God has a way of setting me up for new chapters in my life when I least expect it and am not looking for it. This is one of those new chapters. It is not clear when I discovered the horrors of human trafficking and why I became so invested in doing something about it. I wondered, "Why me?" I have not been a victim, nor, to my knowledge, have I personally had any involvement with victims or those involved in the fight. However, what I have long been passionate about is evangelism and outreach. I understood that, or so I thought. However, I began to discover that the methods of evangelism that I had been using, such as street outreach, tract distribution, and tent crusades, were no longer as fruitful as they had been in my early days of ministry. Soup kitchens, back-to-school giveaways, and toy distributions at Christmas were also good, but they did not produce followers of Christ. I knew I had to discover new ways to reach people.

It was sometime in 2022 when God began to put people in my path who were involved in the fight against human trafficking. I had heard of it, but I had no particular interest in getting involved. But then I began to learn more about it, and what I learned was repulsive. I thought to myself, "How could a civilized society allow modern-day slavery? How could there be more people in slavery today than ever before in human history? Isn't it against the law in every country in the world? So, how could it be the fastest-growing illegal enterprise in the world? How could it exist in my town (and every

town in the United States), and I do not know about it? And how can the average age of entry into this life be twelve to fourteen years old? How can we allow people, including children, to be bought and sold, drugged, raped repeatedly, and beaten mercilessly if they do not bring enough money to the trafficker?"

The more I learned, the more disturbed I became. I have heard it said that if you want to know our purpose in life, find out what we love and what we hate. What we love can be a clue as to what we should do. What we hate can be a clue to a problem that we are called to solve. We are all born to be a solution to a problem. In what seemed like a short time, I began to learn about human trafficking, and I knew I had to do something. It has been said, "Never complain about what you permit." As I started sponsoring anti-trafficking seminars at my church, I began to realize something. If I could be so impacted and moved to action in a relatively short period of time, is it possible that the same could happen to others? It was Jesus who said that the harvest was plentiful, but the laborers were few. Perhaps this was a new form of outreach that could bear greater fruit. And perhaps this is a cause that can sufficiently ignite the outrage of others to the point of action. I realized that it might not be possible for me to completely eradicate trafficking in my context, but I needed to do something.

This was when the idea of training a group of people about the realities of sex and labor trafficking was born. If I could get a group of people to care enough about the issue in my town, could we create a task force made up of various community members, business owners, churches, and law enforcement?

At the same time, I began my doctoral degree program at United. This could not be a coincidence. Perhaps I could make the issue of trafficking my doctoral project. I

presented the idea to my mentors, and they were in full support. But what would the project look like? I initially planned to make the project the creation of a task force, but it was suggested that this would be too big of a goal to create in the short six- to eight-week timeframe of the project. Instead, it was recommended that I make the project a focus group in my context. If there was enough interest after the project, those in the focus group might want to participate in creating a task force after I had completed the doctoral program. I yielded to the wisdom of my mentors and instructors and scaled the project back to a focus group.

But the question remained. Can a group of people with limited knowledge of the subject be provided with the necessary information and inspiration—drawn from my own experience, as well as from survivors and even former traffickers—and transformed into individuals motivated to join the fight against human trafficking? This would be the plan for my project. In the following pages, I lay several foundations. In Biblical Foundation, I use the story of the Good Samaritan, examining his actions in contrast to those of the priest and the Levite, who saw the wounded man but chose not to intervene. This serves as a parallel to modern human trafficking, where victims are suffering in plain sight, yet many fail to see them—or, when they do, they choose to look the other way. We have to decide who we want to be.

In Historical Foundations, I examine the Underground Railroad and compare it to anti-trafficking movements in the world today. Theological Foundation explores the theme of compassion and the importance of doing something to alleviate the suffering of others, in this case, the victims of human trafficking. In Interdisciplinary Foundation, I explore the concept of justice, highlighting how victims are deprived of the most basic

human right: freedom. I also examine ways in which the criminal justice system can be reformed to have a greater impact on stopping this thriving criminal enterprise. In chapter six, I present my project analysis, detailing the project, the hypotheses, the focus group sessions, and the findings based on the data. During the course of the project, there were some unanticipated developments that led to some unexpected results.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

The ministry project that I explored focuses on the issue of human trafficking. The first step I took was to educate those around me about the issue. I used a focus group format. I educated those around me about what human trafficking is and the impact it has, first on my community, then on the surrounding community, and then on our nation. I selected a mix of church leadership and members to participate. I began with a survey to find out how much people knew about the issue. I then began the focus group sessions with the goal of educating the group about human trafficking to determine whether education on the subject would lead to an interest in becoming involved in organized anti-trafficking efforts.

One of the main reasons I chose this topic is that God has laid it on my heart as one of the most horrific crises of our time and, therefore, the greatest need for focused outreach. I started this church because I wanted to focus on outreach as a church. While my home church, Cathedral International, had and still has an outreach component, it was not the primary component in my mind. I wanted evangelism, outreach, and missions to be the heart and soul of the church.

New Life Church was previously located only in nonresidential areas, such as downtown, in an office park, and in a hotel. While we were in the office park, we were not allowed to advertise as a church. While in the hotel, we had no permanent address of

our own. Our outreach to the surrounding community was difficult because of the limited number of people living in the office park and around the hotel. However, the church is now not only in an actual church building but in a residential neighborhood. This gives us a greater opportunity to reach the people living around the church with strategic and relevant ministry programs. In fact, this location is ideal and is an answer to prayer. It was my aim to target this neighborhood as well as the city as a whole with this project. In fact, the project presented the opportunity to unite people of different backgrounds, ethnic groups, and income levels around a clear, compelling mission.

Additionally, it had the potential to have a major impact on people's lives and bring more members into the church. The church has dwindled down to just a relatively few people, and yet the harvest is plentiful all around us. Therefore, I believe that our anti-trafficking efforts, if presented correctly, could be transformative not only for the people around us but also for our church.

I identified the largest age group in Edison Township as twenty-five to forty-four. This is primarily the age group of millennials, which today is twenty-six to forty-one. According to Gil Salamander, in an article entitled "What Do Millennials Care About?" the following three desires are at the top of the list:

1. Experiences: They want to experience something genuine and incredible. They want to build lasting memories.
2. Values: They will push for change, encourage allies to join them, and even create their own causes.
3. Purpose: Millennials want to do something more with their lives than just earn a living. Gone are the days of adhering to what is comfortable, "normal," and safe.

> Millennials are interested in the problems of the world, such as climate change, animal extinction, and GMO's (Genetically Modified Organisms). They want to get involved and find their purpose by being inspired by the changes they want to make.[1]

If this outreach ministry were presented well, it could check each of these three boxes for what millennials care about the most and rally many of them to the cause. It could even result in a significant number of these millennials of varied ethnicities becoming a part of New Life Church. Of course, participation would be encouraged across all age groups.

Finally, it was evident that New Life Church needed a cause. The congregation had dwindled, in part because members lacked a transcendent cause that would draw their focus beyond their own needs and interests. While the church had undertaken individual outreach efforts that got people working together temporarily, at no time in the church's existence had there been a sustained outreach project capable of having a transformational effect on our members. However, if the fight against human trafficking were effectively introduced and implemented, it could have just such an effect. It is this kind of effect that results in commitment, spiritual growth, and inviting friends and neighbors to get involved.

I set realistic and attainable goals, ensuring they were clear to all participants. I also planned to have participants work together, providing additional incentives and motivation. I intended to provide consistent feedback to help participants understand their progress, recognize their strengths, and identify areas for improvement. I asked them to

---

[1] Gil Salamander, "What Do Millennials Care About? It's Not What You Think," Ec*lincher*, https://eclincher.com/what-do-millennials-care-about-its-not-what-you-think/.

provide their own feedback on how well the goals had been explained and whether they received the necessary tools and instructions to complete their stated objectives.

My Ministry Journey

In High School I was offered a baseball scholarship by two out of state colleges. However, I decided to stay in state and attend Rutgers, the state university of New Jersey. My two closest friends, the ones that also played the saxophone, also went to Rutgers. One of them became my roommate for my first year. His family was raised Nation of Islam, and he observed Ramadan, but other than that, he did not seem any more committed to his religion that I did to mine.

In spite of a strong moral center and avoiding getting in trouble (for the most part), I still had no particular love for God. I did go to church every Sunday growing up, but this was because I had no choice. My participation in youth activities in the church was minimal. I used the excuse that I was too busy with the band and baseball.

I was an average student academically. I graduated in the middle of my high school class of over four hundred students. I don't believe it was because I was incapable of doing better. I had a lot of promise back when I skipped a grade. However, I was distracted by extra-curricular activities and was content to know enough to get by.

In my first semester in college I played on the baseball team. It took me from my studies, or at least I allowed it to. I ended up getting poor grades. I decided that since the manager did not play freshman, there was no sense practicing every day if I would not get any playing time, so I quit the team. The following semester I was invited by a persistent young man to attend a church held on campus on Sunday evenings, New Hope

Church. He eventually wore me down and I attended. That was no small task, because I had intended to never attend church again once I left home and went to college.

I must say I enjoyed the service. There was a gospel choir there, the Liberated Gospel Choir of Rutgers University. It boasted of about 120 voices, and had a musical ensemble as accompaniment. I never cared much about singing, but I did enjoy playing music, so the band backing up the choir piqued my interest. The choir had auditions soon after, and I went. I was accepted and I sang tenor and played my saxophone at times. By this time I was also interested in piano, and the pianist was phenomenal. I started to also play piano.

But something else was going on. I started to see something I've never seen before. I saw young people my age that loved Jesus Christ. I had never seen this in my church growing up. The kids that grew up with me did not strike me as particularly committed, nor was I. To me they talked and acted just like any of the kids at school, only the setting was church. They did not inspire a closer walk with God.

But here at Liberated Gospel Choir and New Hope, I was seeing young people my age completely sold out for Christ. The language was different. There was no profanity, and in high school I could be quite profane with my friends. They talked about the things of God. What is this? I didn't understand. I though this type of commitment was just for the mothers and deacons of my Baptist church. The mothers would should, get stiff, and get literally carried out by the ushers. The deacons would pray those eloquent public prayers that seemed to be the same words every time they prayed. I didn't think much of it at the time, and certainly did not think it was for me.

But for kids in their late teens and early twenties to shout, praise God, pray with passion, know the bible, and witness, was something completely foreign to me. But it was attractive and fascinating. I wanted this. By the end of the summer I rededicated my life to Christ. This did not require a coming down the aisle. It did not require a camp counselor to tell me to pray five minutes a day. To this day I am not completely sure if it was at this time that I got saved for the first time, or if it was only a rededication, but suddenly it became real to me.

At the beginning of my ministry journey, I played in a Christian band called Emmanuel. The band existed for the sole purpose of willing people to Christ. Everyone in the band was committed to evangelism. The band ministered in parks, playgrounds, prisons, projects, and street corners. The fruit that we saw in my earliest years with the band was incredible. It was common to see scores of people come to Christ at each outreach, which was about two weekends a month for years. We would then refer them to local churches. It was through these experiences that I developed a heart for outreach, evangelism, and missions. That passion has continued to this day.

At Cathedral International, I served as the Pastor of Evangelism and Outreach. In this capacity, I organized members and set up evangelism programs and outreach projects in our various church locations. The results were mediocre at best, in my opinion, because these programs and projects were not what the context required. For example, in Perth Amboy, we had a project in which we invited homeless people to shower in the gym showers at the Family Life Enrichment Center. The problem was that we were unable to locate many homeless people. This is not to say that there is no homeless population in Perth Amboy. However, we assumed that if we built it, they would come. If

they did not, all they needed was a little encouragement. The results were subpar. Very few people took advantage of the opportunity.

With our anti-trafficking ministry, I hoped to learn from some of the mistakes made in my professional development, such as the one described above. I planned to do a better job of research and reconnaissance and develop partnerships throughout the community, not just rely on my own church.

It is this desire to reach people for the Kingdom of God that fuels my anti-trafficking pursuits. There is no doubt that my ministry experiences have led to this passion, which is undoubtedly the most ambitious ministry outreach project I will have ever attempted. As stated above, it is my prayer that this ministry will continue well into the future.

What is Human Trafficking?

> We must show new energy in fighting back an old evil. Nearly two centuries after the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade and more than a century after slavery was officially ended in its last strongholds, the trade in human beings for any purpose must not be allowed to thrive in our time. The founding documents of the United Nations and the founding documents of America stand in the same tradition. Both assert that human beings should never be reduced to objects of power or commerce because their dignity is inherent.
>
> —President George W. Bush, September 23, 2003[2]

> [Human trafficking] ought to concern every person, because it's a debasement of our common humanity. It ought to concern every community, because it tears at the social fabric. It ought to concern every business, because it distorts markets. It ought to concern every nation, because it endangers public health and fuels violence and organized crime. I'm talking about the injustice, the outrage, of human trafficking, which must be called by its true name—modern slavery.

[2] Foot, Kirsten. *Collaborating against Human Trafficking: Cross-Sector Challenges and Practices*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2015. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, 1. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/dtl/detail.action?docID=4085964.

—President Barack Obama, September 25, 2012[3]

Human trafficking is defined by the United States and the United Nations as the compelling of a person into any form of work or service through force, fraud, or coercion. Human trafficking is enslavement—that is, the control and exploitation of one person by another. In human trafficking situations, some victims coerce others while being coerced themselves. Money may or may not be exchanged when a person is trafficked, and victims may be commercially exploited or used by the trafficker as personal slaves.

According to the US Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Women's Health, the following demographics were compiled based on information reported to the National Human Trafficking Hotline from December 2012 to December 2016. The data is based on aggregate information obtained through signals such as phone calls, emails, and online tip reports. The data do not represent the actual number of cases identified or processed, nor do they represent the full scope of human trafficking. Demographics of potential victims of human trafficking in the state of New Jersey:

- 701 cases reported
- 1,372 potential victims
- Adults: 393
- Minors: 292
- Female: 612
- Male: 63

[3] Foot, Kirsten. *Collaborating Against Human Trafficking*, 1.

- Gender minorities: 3
- US citizen/Legal permanent resident: 274
- Foreign national: 172

Top five sex trafficking venues:

1. Hotel-/Motel-based
2. Commercial-front brothels
3. Online ad. Venue unknown
4. Residential brothels
5. Escort services

Top five labor trafficking venues:

1. Domestic work
2. Restaurants/Food service
3. Factories
4. Retail/Other small businesses
5. Landscaping service[4]

How Can We Fight It?

Combating human trafficking requires the expertise, resources, and efforts of many individuals and entities. It is a complex, multifaceted issue that requires a comprehensive response from governmental and nongovernmental entities in areas such as human rights, labor and employment, health and services, and law enforcement.

[4] New Jersey Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Women's Health, 2017, new_jersey_profile_efforts_to_combat_human_trafficking.pdf.

Partnerships among all of these entities are needed to have a positive impact. "The United States is committed to eradicating trafficking in persons, and we will draw on tools ranging from law enforcement and victim service provision to public awareness building and diplomatic pressure. Because we know that government efforts are not enough, we are also increasing our partnerships with a broad coalition of local communities, faith-based and nongovernmental organizations, schools, and businesses. To bring all these elements together and to be sure we are maximizing our efforts, today I am directing my cabinet to find ways to strengthen our current work and to expand on partnerships with civil society and the private sector, so that we can bring more resources to bear in fighting this horrific injustice."—President Barack Obama[5]

If we were going to launch an anti-trafficking ministry in my context, it would first be necessary to determine whether the results of my focus group would show that people would have an interest in participating in anti-trafficking community outreach. If so, I would then determine the response to recruiting people from other community groups to see if they were interested in creating a community task force. If there were such interest, I would then conduct the appropriate recruitment procedures to get people to volunteer for the following:

- Flyer distribution offering assistance to victims
- Interventions for those who want to escape their traffickers, such as referrals to safe homes within the state

[5] Foot, Kirsten. *Collaborating against Human Trafficking: Cross-Sector Challenges and Practices* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Summit, PA, 2015), 1.

- Provision of ministry to clients of sex traffickers through partnerships with organizations that perform this service
- Offering ministry to traffickers themselves through partnerships with organizations that provide this service
- Prevention programs for middle school and high school students, children in foster care, and other vulnerable populations

A couple of years ago, New Life Church conducted a survey in the Potters Crossing neighborhood, asking what issues people cared about most and what issues the church should address. The most popular answer was to have something for the children. Those interviewed, whether they were parents of younger children or not, were concerned about the lack of safe, constructive, engaging, and morally uplifting activities for the youth. The lack of constructive engagement for children is a vulnerability that traffickers often exploit. The United Nations estimates that minors make up 27% of all trafficking victims worldwide. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children estimates that between 100,000 and 300,000 children under the age of eighteen are at risk of being exploited in the United States. The average age of entry into human trafficking is twelve to fourteen years old.[6]

Additionally, a recruiter may be a seventeen-year-old girl or boy who looks just like them. The boy tries to become the girl's boyfriend, or the girl tries to become the girl's best friend. These recruiters can be found on many school campuses.[7] Furthermore,

---

[6] Patterson, Susan, *How You Can Fight Human Trafficking* (Through God's Grace, Irvine, CA, 2014), 4.

[7] Child Prostitution, The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, online site for gvnet.com/child prostitution/USA.htm taken from the article: "U.S. sex trade consumes thousands of children." Jeff Johnson, One News Now, 7/22/2008.

the majority of Edison's population is of Indian descent, and 55.6% of them are foreign-born, well above the New Jersey average of 23.4%. In Potters Crossing, 8.1% of the population does not speak English well or at all, above the state average of 6.2%.

According to the Congressional Research Service (CRS) and the US State Department, between 700,000 and two million people, most of them women and children, are trafficked each year across international borders. Thirty-five percent are under the age of eighteen. According to the CRS, the majority of these victims come from Asia. Further study is needed to determine the percentage of Asian trafficking victims who are from India, which is the majority Asian population in Edison. Organized crime groups operating within and across borders often run trafficking networks. These networks are structured, organized, well-funded, and operate beyond the reach of law enforcement.[8]

Traffickers typically maintain subservience through debt bondage, passport confiscation, physical and psychological abuse, rape, torture, threats of arrest and deportation, and threats to the trafficked person's family. Victims often find themselves cut off from the outside world, unable to speak the local language, and without identification or documentation. In extreme cases, they may not know where they are. Consequently, it can be difficult to find help. In other cases, trafficked people fear the police because the law enforcement system is—or is perceived to be—corrupt or because they fear immediate deportation. Trafficked persons are often afraid to return to their country of origin because of remaining smuggling debts, fear of public humiliation if

[8] Trafficking in Persons: Myths, Methods and Human Rights, Population Reference Bureau, Washington, DC, 2001, https://www.prb.org/resources/trafficking-in-persons-myths-methods-and-human-rights/.

their work is revealed, and possible further victimization of the victims as well as their families.[9]

It is difficult to determine how many people crossing the southern US border are being trafficked today. There are smatterings of organized crime groups operating along the US–Mexico border with varying degrees of power, sophistication, and success. What is clear is that the human trafficking industry has become a multibillion-dollar business as a result of the migration surge across the globe.

Current statistics suggest that there may be an avenue of human trafficking with people of Indian descent hidden in the shadows of Edison. This was investigated by our ministry. We intended to teach volunteers how to identify where human trafficking was taking place. For example, if workers are living with their employers, that is a possible sign. If a large number of people are living in a small, cramped space and the living conditions are in bad shape, that is another clue.

If volunteers spoke to residents and their answers sounded rehearsed, this may have been a hint. If people appeared fearful or submissive with signs of physical abuse, I aimed to teach volunteers to report these signs to the police. If individuals were involved in prostitution and were under eighteen, this was a clear signal of trafficking. They may have been restricted from socializing or contacting their families. They may have also appeared deprived of basic necessities, such as food, water, sleep, or medical care. They may have also seemed to "date" much older, abusive, or controlling men.

I intended to inform my context that attempting to rescue someone victimized by trafficking could be unsafe. They should report it to the proper authorities rather than take

---

[9] Trafficking in Persons: Population Reference Bureau.

action themselves. I also planned to develop partnerships with other organizations that could assist with housing, legal assistance, medical care, and similar emergency services. I aimed to ensure that these partner groups were accessible to the local police department so that when the time came for a rescue, there would be the best chance of success.

Undocumented immigrants are at high risk for human trafficking. In many cases, they are forced to work without a contract, or if there is one, it is in a language they do not understand. The "employer" may maintain control of the trafficking victim's passport and other necessary identity documents as leverage to do as they are told. They may also be forced to work off a loan instead of paying money, either for a specific or unclear period of time or even without a set time frame. There are numerous examples of labor trafficking as domestic servitude, in prison-like factories, and as migrant agricultural "workers."

Sadly, there are cases where the parents of the victims themselves have sold their own children into slavery for profit. There are documented cases of controlling parents, guardians, or romantic partners who control or monitor their movements, their communications, and their spending for what little money they are given. Victims are usually impoverished and financially dependent on their captors. They may be exploited for labor, sex, or both, often in private homes out of sight. However, it is also the case that people are victimized in plain sight, in such places as workplaces or restaurants.

It was my intention that the implementation of this strategy would achieve the following results:

1. Establish a task force on trafficking in Edison, New Jersey, which would include the expertise, resources, and efforts of various individuals and entities.

2. Gain representation from the Indian community, which is the majority population in Edison. This community often remains insular, but if the initiative were presented effectively, many would recognize that collaboration was in their community's best interest and would have been willing to work together for the common good.
3. Form partnerships to carry out the previously described outreach projects:
    - Distribute flyers offering assistance to victims. Trafficking victims could have seen these flyers in local hotels and motels, hospitals and medical clinics, restaurants and malls, and hair and nail salons, just to name a few strategic locations. The New Jersey Division on Human Trafficking is a resource for such flyers, which includes a hotline offering assistance and informing victims that they are protected under international, federal, and New Jersey law.
    - Implement interventions for individuals seeking to escape their traffickers, with referrals to safe houses within the state. Various agencies provide emergency shelter and care for victims fleeing their traffickers.
    - Provide ministry to customers of sex traffickers through partnerships with organizations that offer this service. Pornography has become a tool to create buyer demand for sex. There are organizations that provide assistance to johns who have become addicted to break the cycle of pornography addiction.
    - Offer ministry to the traffickers themselves through partnerships with organizations that perform this service. For example, there are ministries that focus on bringing Jesus to pimps. Many of them want to get out of "the life" because it is a dark life, but they do not see the path to get out. While there are many efforts to reach out to the victims of sex trafficking, there is almost

nothing to support the traffickers. I hoped to connect to these ministries and be trained by them to bring freedom and deliverance to pimps, which could reduce sex trafficking.

- Establish prevention programs for middle school and high school students, children in foster care, and other vulnerable populations. There are anti-trafficking organizations that provide training for people willing to give talks with PowerPoint presentations to schools and other community groups on how to spot traffickers and the best ways to respond. We aimed to work with these groups and provide crucial prevention to deter traffickers.

4. Foster cooperation across ethnic groups, income classes, and generations. As stated above, millennials make up the largest generation in Edison, and while many may not attend a church, statistics show that this generation is looking for meaningful causes that address societal issues. This cause, with the right preparation and presentation, could qualify. Furthermore, it could be compelling enough to mobilize people to get involved, including non-churchgoers and even non-Christians.
5. Expect spiritual impact and church growth. I hoped that this outreach would not only reach victims, johns, and pimps for Christ but also the volunteers. I hoped to see people come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. It was also my hope that we would see New Life Church grow as a result. As mentioned earlier, our church was in desperate need of growth. If this outreach was successful, it could lead to church growth.

Furthermore, this ministry has the potential to get churches to work together as well. Through my ministry experience, I have learned that even though all churches may

not be willing to participate, there will always be some that will work together to reach people for Christ.

For example, over the years in ministry, I have learned the importance of partnership and collaboration with other churches, not just in outreach projects but also in fellowship. I have organized and advertised tent crusades, prayer gatherings, marches, and even flea markets. In each case, the level of participation of other churches was far less than I had hoped and planned.

Although the reasons may vary, my discussion with the few leaders from other churches who participated led to the conclusion that there are some pastors who are not interested in joint programs unless they are in charge or unless any converts are directed to their churches. Additionally, other church leaders stay within their silos and have no interest in fellowship.

So, while I may not be able to reach a majority of churches, or even a significant number, to help us, I do expect that there will be some local churches that will partner with us in this fight. And these are the churches that we will work with.

I have also discovered through my years of outreach ministry that people often do not participate in the church, not because they are uncaring or unwilling, but because they often feel unprepared and inexperienced. They do not know what to say or what to do, and this can be very intimidating. Therefore, they simply do not participate. However, I have also found that when people are told in advance what is expected of them, given a limited and specific role, and told that we would provide the necessary training to equip them beforehand, they feel more empowered and more willing to participate.

Likewise, this task force will partner with a number of anti-trafficking ministries with particular specialties as described above. Each of these ministries will provide the training needed, and we will offer volunteers a limited task to get their feet wet and get a win under their belts. I have found this to be more effective in keeping people engaged. We will adopt this strategy when we request that people join us in this effort.

Conclusion

I planned to create small groups from churches that were willing to work together to address the issue of human trafficking. The idea was that each church could contribute resources and fundraise together. The more they worked together, the easier it would be to maintain these collaborative relationships. Furthermore, if we worked together across ethnic, racial, and generational lines, I hoped to develop an even greater synergy that could become a blueprint to show others that "it could be done."

If this project proves to be successful to any degree, I believe it can be duplicated by other church leaders in other contexts, using the ministry partnerships we have developed nationwide, as well as learning from what was done well and what was not done well. Therefore, each subsequent attempt by other contexts will be even more fruitful in contributing to the elimination of human trafficking in towns and cities across the nation.

My context was my church, New Life Church in Edison, and the immediate neighborhood surrounding the church, which is the Potters Crossing section of Edison. My context also included the township of Edison in general.

The problem in my context was that our members were then unaware that human trafficking existed within our sphere of influence. My hypothesis aimed to solve the problem by educating my context on the issue. If a focus group comprised of church leaders and members participated in an educational workshop about human trafficking, then they would learn more about what human trafficking was and how it impacted the local church. They might also be motivated to become involved in the community to combat trafficking.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37, NIV)

25 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"
26 "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"
27 He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"
28 "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."
29 But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"
30 In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead.
31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.
32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.
33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him.
34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him.
35 The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'
36 "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"
37 The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

The story of the Good Samaritan is one of the most famous biblical stories of all time. Its popularity extends even into the non-Christian world, so much so that many

countries now have "Good Samaritan" laws that provide legal protection for those who help others.[1]

There are two basic questions in this well-known parable. The first is, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" The second is, "Who is my neighbor?" I examine each of these questions below by conducting a closer analysis of the parable. The most logical way to organize the parable is based on its characters: the victim, the robbers, the priest, the Levite, the Samaritan, and the innkeeper.

Additionally, examining this paper in light of my DMin project on the issue of human trafficking reveals that this story reflects the same reality as that of a trafficked victim—the failed response of many in positions of authority with available resources and the willingness of ordinary, everyday people who see the need, feel compassion, and do what they can. Too often, people dehumanize those whom God loves and values. As Tim Keller explains in his book *Generous Justice*, "Jesus taught that a lack of concern for the poor is not a minor lapse, but reveals that something is seriously wrong with one's spiritual compass, the heart." His point is that a heart that is not inclined toward grace and mercy is one that has not experienced true compassion. Ignoring the poor, whom God values, is evidence of a "heart" that does not value God.[2]

Dehumanization, or the active refusal to give value to other human beings, drives all forms of exploitation. This is especially evident in commercial sex trafficking and

---

[1] Working Preacher, https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/ordinary-15-3/commentary-on-luke-1025-37-5.

[2] Raleigh Sadler, *Living in the Light of the Good Samaritan: Giving Value to the Devalued* (Lakeland, FL: Let My People Go, 2013), 1. https://raleighsadler.com/blog/2013/07/08/living-in-light-of-the-good-samaritan-giving-value-to-the-devalued.

labor trafficking. A person is dehumanized when the personhood of the individual is stripped away, and they are left as nothing more than an objective commodity to be bought and sold. From the moment that we dehumanize our neighbor, it is not a far leap to objectification and commodification."[3]

What Must I Do to Inherit Eternal Life?

This learned expert is also referred to as the Doctor of the Mosaic Law. His role was both to expound on the Law and to preserve it. His role was important and influential. The life of the Jewish people was guided by the Law, both in its written and traditional form. He asks Jesus the question not for the sake of honest inquiry but, as the text indicates, to test Him—most likely to assess His ability to answer a question from the Law, which governed life in Israel. As an adversary of Jesus, he wanted to see if Jesus would answer in a way that differed from Moses, the lawgiver, possibly providing grounds to accuse Him.

When Jesus responded by asking the lawyer, "What is written in the law? How do you read it?" The lawyer immediately referred to the Shema, a Jewish prayer recited in morning and evening prayer services. The name is derived from the first word in the Hebrew language, meaning "hear." The passage is found in Deuteronomy 6:4–5:

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." He also drew from Leviticus 19:18: "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD."

[3] Sadler, "Living in the Light."

It is possible that this lawyer heard Jesus use this very same scriptural formula when, in Matthew 22:35–40, Jesus was asked what He considered the great commandment in the Law. What we do know is that Jesus told him he answered correctly, and if he followed this commandment, he would live.

Yet, what is interesting here is that Jesus's response did not end the issue, despite the fact that Jesus clearly affirmed the lawyer's answer. Why was the lawyer not satisfied? He was told that his answer about inheriting eternal life was correct. Perhaps it was because he was not truly seeking eternal life but was trying to test Jesus. He was not satisfied, so the inquiry continued. It was the second part of the commandment, "Love your neighbor as yourself," that he seized upon.

He wanted Jesus to qualify the commandment by specifying which neighbors the commandment was referring to. It is possible that the lawyer wanted Jesus to lose favor with the people by prompting him to openly say that the neighbors they were to love were their Roman oppressors or other less desirable Gentiles. The second part of the commandment—loving your neighbor as yourself—was apparently up for debate.

There are many within Christendom who may say that this is not the way to eternal life. Rather, it comes through believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, confessing our sins, and receiving Him as our Lord and Savior. While these things are certainly true and biblical, they are the means, or the root, of eternal life. The end, or the fruit, is revealed in our works rather than our faith.

Faith without works is dead. True faith will keep the great commandment to love God and love our neighbor as God commands. Thus, Jesus does not violate the truth that

we are saved by grace and not by works (Eph. 2:8–9). True saving faith is revealed by someone who loves God and loves his neighbor as himself.

Eternal life is inextricably linked to Christ Himself in the New Testament. John 3:36 says, “He who has the Son has life.” John 5:24 says, “Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.” So we know that Jesus made the way to eternal life clear, that this life was in Him. He also shows us, as he showed this Jewish expert in the law, that eternal life is given to those who love God and love their neighbor as themselves.

Further, in the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 25, Jesus tells us that those who enter into eternal life will be those who care for the least of these, His brothers and sisters. While eternal life is found in Christ alone, it could be shown that the evidence of a life committed to Christ is one that demonstrates the fruit of that relationship by loving our neighbors as ourselves.

And Who Is My Neighbor?

Throughout human history, attempts to answer this question have essentially been limited to blood ties, shared culture, or geographical proximity. Furthermore, most people determine their own answers. And when we become our own standard for ethics and morality, the results tend to vary wildly. We do what is right in our own eyes. Sigmund Freud had a disdain for the standard of loving our neighbor as ourselves. He posed the following questions about this biblical injunction:

> Why should we do this? What good is it to us? Above all, how can we do such a thing? How could it possibly be done? My love seems to me a valuable thing that

> I have no right to throw away without reflection. It imposes obligations on me, which I must be prepared to make sacrifices to fulfill. If I love someone, he must be worthy of it in some way or another. He will be worthy of it if he is so like me in important respects that I can love myself in him; worthy of it if he is so much more perfect than I that I can love my ideal of myself in him; I must love him if he is the son of my friend, since the pain my friend would feel if anything untoward happened to him would be my pain-I should have to share it.[4]

Freud believed that loving a neighbor presupposed knowing him. To him, it seemed absurd to show neighborly love to a perfect stranger. Freud went on to say, "But if he is a stranger to me and cannot attract me by any value he has in himself or any significance he may have already acquired in my emotional life, it will be hard for me to love him. I shall even be doing wrong if I do, for my love is valued as a privilege by all those belonging to me; it is an injustice to them if I put a stranger on a level with them."[5]

However, Jesus cut through human ethical and moral standards and reveals God's answer to the question of who a neighbor is, as well as how a neighbor should be treated. Humanity needs a standard of love outside of ourselves, specifically the divine standard that Christ reveals in this parable.

The Victim

When Jesus begins the parable, He begins with the phrase "a certain man." It is implied, not explicitly stated, that the man was Jewish. It best fits the tone of the story. Jesus said nothing about his stature, which, in essence, made him an ordinary Jewish man. He traveled the rocky and desolate road, perhaps being aware of its dangers. There is no mention of unfamiliarity with the road. The victim was aware of the risks. Often we

---

[4] Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, trans. James Strachey (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1962), 1.

[5] Cited in Slavoj Žižek, Kenneth Reinhard, and Eric L. Santner. *The Neighbor, Three Inquiries in Political Theology* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 1.

assume that someone "deserves what they get" for being in a bad area. This is simply not the case. There are many reasons why someone may be in that area. For example, this is where they may live or work; they may have family who refuse to move, or they may be a part of a community organization that provides outreach to under-resourced individuals and families. There are any number of reasons, and no one deserves to be beaten and left for dead.

We do not know why the victim was on Jericho road coming down from Jerusalem. And it should not matter. Likewise, there are some who believe trafficked individuals should have "seen it coming" and avoided it. We do not know what caused them to be in this horrific situation, but blaming the victim is unacceptable and wrong. We have to be able to see Christ in people who have been beaten and abused.

As a societal norm, victim blaming is pervasive and can occur in overt and subtle ways. Survivors are often questioned or second-guessed about what they could (or should) have done differently to prevent the trafficking. The more the public paints victims as catalysts of their own trafficking, the less responsibility is placed on the true perpetrator, the trafficker or the buyer. Victim blaming is also perpetuated by our cultural need for logical explanations for bad deeds and the assumption that things in life are fair. "If we start believing the world *isn't* fair, then it becomes more apparent that *anyone* can fall victim to any tragedy."[6]

[6] Micheala Denny, blog, *Victim Blaming: The Invisible Force Holding Back Sex Trafficked Individuals* (Tallahassee, FL: The Florida Center for Children and Youth Inc. d/b/a Voices for Florida, 2023), 1.

The Robbers

We do not know the background of these brigands, nor do we even know how many there were. Perhaps it was best for Jesus not to provide this type of detail in the story. No doubt, it would have changed the focus of the story to hatred for other groups of people, such as the listener. The lawyer Jesus was speaking to would have felt justified in excluding the robbers' ethnic group from his already narrow definition of neighbors.

Nor do we know why they were highwaymen. The first-century Jewish historian Josephus says that Herod the Great once dismissed 40,000 men who were employed in the construction of the Temple and that a large number of them became highwaymen (Josephus "Antiquities," xv. 7). Were these robbers among the unemployed who felt they had no choice but to rob people to make money? We can only speculate. Of course, there is no justification for what they did, but perhaps we can see them through the eyes of Christ and realize that they, too, need redemption.

Bishop Gale Oliver had a niece who was sex trafficked. He met with her pimp to convince him to let her go and then shared Jesus with him. He discovered that there are pimps who want to get "out of the life" because it is a dark life, but they see no way out. Today, Bishop Oliver shares with anti-trafficking groups about the best way to approach pimps and how a church can work with them. He says that while there are many efforts to reach out to victims of sex trafficking and many efforts at prevention, there is next to nothing to support pimps.[7]

[7] Susan Patterson, *The Role of the Church in Ending Human Trafficking* (Irvine, CA: Through God's Grace Ministry, 2023), 74.

Living in the ruins of rocky caves and deserted places reminds us of two similar situations. We can recall that Jesus visited a man who was possessed by legions of demons. This encounter is reported in Mark 5:1-20. Day and night, the man stayed in the mountains and tombs, crying and cutting himself with stones. People often put him in chains, but no one could restrain him. Jesus cared enough about the man to see through his demonic condition and see someone in desperate need of deliverance. After Jesus set the man free, he ended up clothed, in his right mind, and telling his church about the great things Jesus had done for him.

Another situation of cave dwellers who turned their situations around was at the hands of David in I Samuel 22. In the cave, Adullam David gathered about four hundred men who were in distress, in debt, or discontented. They would eventually become a valuable part of David's armies and mighty men of valor.

While society is willing to give up on robbers, we should not. We are told nothing more about the robbers in the parable of the Good Samaritan after they robbed the victim, but no one is outside of the hope found in Christ.

The Priest

At the time of the parable, Jericho was a priestly city. The priests performed their sacred duties in Jerusalem and commuted back to Jericho. It is estimated that no fewer than 12,000 priests and Levites lived in Jericho.[8] Therefore, it would not have been unusual for a priest to be on the Jericho road. This is the only place in the Gospels where

[8] Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old and New Testaments, A Practical and Explanatory Commentary, Luke 10:31* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1983), 236.

Jesus leveled what could be considered a criticism of a priest. It was not as severe a criticism as He made against the Pharisees and teachers of the Law, but He makes it clear that, at least in this case, the priest was not showing compassion.

We do not know why the priest failed to show compassion, and Jesus did not elaborate on the story. Perhaps the priest thought that the half-dead victim was actually dead, and he did not want to be defiled by touching a corpse. Or maybe he felt that he "gave at the office" and did not believe that helping this man was his responsibility. Or maybe he simply did not care. Whatever the reason, what we do know is that the priest saw the man and passed by on the other side of the road.

The priest would certainly have had the resources to provide for this victim. We do not know what this priest carried with him to provide aid if he wanted to care for the man, but he certainly would have had the means to obtain help for him. Likewise, many spiritual leaders today see their responsibilities as limited to the house of worship and fail to muster the compassion to get involved in an outside need, no matter how urgent. Perhaps they would benefit by once again hearing the words of Jesus: "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me" (Matt. 25:45).

The Levite

This verse is recognized as the only mention of Levites in the Gospels. Both the priests and the Levites were from the tribe of Levi. They were both consecrated to serve in the Temple in Jerusalem. The priest offered sacrifices and conducted the services. The Levites assisted the priests in their services. They were also responsible for maintaining the holy things of the Temple and overseeing the Temple's revenue.

This Levite went a little further than the priest, perhaps because of his servant role in the Temple. While the priest only saw the sacrifice and passed by on the other side, the Levite came over and looked at the man. When he did, he passed by on the other side. We do not know how busy the road was at that time, but it is possible that when the Levite saw that the man was still alive, he assumed that he would be fine, that someone else would take care of him, or that perhaps he was just a "bum" or a "drunk" sleeping it off. We do not know what was going through the Levite's mind, but we do know that he took a closer look at the man and then left without offering him any help.

One of the challenges of our day is that there are so many needs. It can be overwhelming to determine who we can and cannot help. With the advent of caring nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and nonprofit relief organizations, as well as government programs, we assume that others will take care of those we see in need. However, the problem with that thinking is that it absolves us of any responsibility to personally help someone God puts in our path. And so we pass on the other side. In the words of Vikram Seth, "God save us from people who mean well."[9]

The Samaritan

The Samaritan had a number of reasons not to help the man. He was a Samaritan, and the victim was most likely a Jew. The Jews had "no dealings with the Samaritans" (John 4:9). He was on a journey, most likely on business. He could have reasonably used the excuse that he had "places to be and things to do." It might even have been dangerous in that area. But the text tells us an important difference between the priest and the

[9] Vikram Seth, *A Suitable Boy* (New York, NY: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2005), 7.

Levite. The Samaritan "had compassion" for the victim. And when someone has compassion, they find a way to get involved and make a difference. In the words of Pema Chodron, "Compassion is not a relationship between the healer and the wounded. It's a relationship between equals. Only when we know our own darkness well can we be present with the darkness of others. Compassion becomes real when we recognize our shared humanity."[10]

In Martin Luther King Jr.'s book *Strength to Love*, the great preacher and civil rights leader offers further insights into this powerful lesson. He suggests that one reason for the religious leaders' failure to act was their fear of harm; they may have said to themselves: "If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?" King goes on to suggest that the Good Samaritan was able to help because he reversed the question: "If I do not stop to help, what will happen to this man?" As a result, the Good Samaritan was able to show both the love of God and what it means to be a neighbor. He had to put himself at risk to accomplish the task.[11]

The Samaritan used what he had. He bound his wounds and poured in oil and wine, the oil to soothe the inflammation and the wine to cleanse the wounds. He physically lifted him up and set the victim on his own beast while he walked until they reached an inn. We do not know how far a walk it was. This inn was the kind where the landlord provided for the guests. He spent the night with him, caring for him. The next morning, he took two denarii—about two days' wages—and gave it to the innkeeper. The

---

[10] Pema Chodron, *The Places That Scare You: A Guide to Fearlessness in Difficult Times* (Boulder, CO: Shambhala Classics, 2002), 21.

[11] R. Burris, *Another Look at the Good Samaritan: Luke 10:25–37* (Church Road, VA: Review & Expositor, 2017), 457-461. https://doi.org/10.1177/0034637317721983.

relatively small amount suggested an imminent return, as the Samaritan told the innkeeper that he would be back to pay the bill if the innkeeper spent more time caring for the man.

The Innkeeper

The Samaritan obviously trusts the innkeeper and does not appear to be worried about being overcharged. This has been recognized by historians as a caravanserai, a roadside inn usually found along major trade routes. They provided not only shelter for travelers but also safe houses from bandits. They appeared roughly twenty to twenty-five miles apart—about a day's journey—along the busiest Silk Road routes through the Middle East, Central Asia, and North Africa.[12]

The design of these buildings also reflected their protective purpose. Often built just outside the nearest town or village, they were encircled by immense walls resembling those of a fort. Caravans entered through a high, massive gate that could be secured from within at night with heavy chains. A porter stood guard just past the gate, charged with protecting the people, goods, and animals inside.

The interior of a caravanserai, however, looked more like an inn than a fortress. A large courtyard on the ground floor, surrounded by storerooms and stables for camels, donkeys, and horses, often included a corner for cooking fires. Small, unfurnished rooms

[12] The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database (Des Moines, IA: BibleSoft, Inc., 2001) https://biblehub.com/luke/10-35.htm.

for lodgers were found on the second floor. Some larger caravanserais also had a bathhouse and prayer room.[13]

The story provides no details about the inn itself, but the innkeeper was deemed trustworthy enough to take care of the victim with the Samaritan's money. And while this caravanserai was a for-profit business, it made its way into Jesus's story in an honorable way. This could be considered a nod to all of the first responders who provide care for the beaten and half dead. When Jesus asked which of these three was a neighbor to the man who had fallen into the hands of the robbers, it was clear that it was the Samaritan—but the Samaritan had help. The innkeeper kept his commitment to care for the man as well, even though it could simply be considered his job.

Summary

The story of the Samaritan shows us that compassion alone is not enough. It calls on the Church to intervene. By staying with the injured victim, tending to and bandaging his wounds, the Samaritan can be said to have interrupted the "trajectory" of the injured victim, who would surely have died if he had not been helped. Due to its complex nature, global human trafficking can only be thwarted through multilateral efforts. Churches should work with civil society groups and NGOs to address the profound challenges trafficking poses in repatriating victims, building shelters for returning victims, and even pressuring governments to develop and enforce laws.[14]

---

[13] Tyson Brown, *Caravanserai* (Washington, DC, National Geographic Society, 1996-2003), 1. https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/caravanserai/.

[14] Roland Chia, *God and the Victim* (Bible House, SG: Ethos Institute for Public Christianity, 2015), 5. https://ethosinstitute.sg/god-and-the-victim/.

The Church can be that welcoming community where victims of trafficking can find a home where they feel accepted and loved without being stigmatized. The Church can be that healing and nurturing community where severely scarred people can begin to rebuild their lives and explore promising directions for their futures. Most importantly, the Church can be the community of grace where victims of abuse can experience the saving embrace of Jesus Christ.[15]

There is no doubt that victims of human trafficking today are leading a half-dead existence as our victims in the story. For example, women who are put to "work" on the streets of Southern California are given a quota of $1,000 per night at $50 a "session." They work from 6:00 p.m. until sometimes 6:00 a.m., seven days a week. If the "girls" fail to meet their quota, they are burned with an iron, beaten, kept in dog cages, made to take ice baths, and waterboarded.[16] In many ways, this is far worse than being beaten by robbers on a road. This is nonstop torture. And this is not limited to Southern California. We can clearly see the comparison to the victim in Jesus's story.

If the crisis is as serious as it appears, why don't more people get involved in the fight against trafficking? Many times, it is due to a lack of awareness and understanding. In my years of working in outreach and evangelism, I have discovered that people often do not participate not because they are uncaring or unwilling but, most of the time, because they feel unprepared and inexperienced. They have shared with me and others that they do not know what to say or what to do, and when dealing with such a significant issue, this can be very intimidating. As a result, many people do not get involved.

---

[15] Chia, "God and the Victim."

[16] Patterson, *Role of the Church*, 7.

However, I have also found that when people are told in advance what is expected of them, they are more inclined to participate. Further, if they are given a limited and specific task and the necessary training beforehand, the people feel more empowered. We have often used role-playing to learn what to do and what to say, and the results were encouraging. People were excited to be a part of it. And when you add that they will not be alone, but always with a partner, they experience an even greater level of empowerment. I have found this to be the most effective way to keep people engaged.

But there is another reason people do not get involved. Many who are aware of trafficking going on near them refuse to speak up because they are afraid of the possible consequences of getting involved. And this hearkens back to the priest and the Levite in our story. They saw the need, and we are not told why they did not get involved, but the bottom line is that they refused to help. Perhaps they were afraid of the consequences of getting involved. There are many people today who have the means and the opportunity to make a difference, but they pass on the other side. Do they love these victims? No, not according to Jesus's parable.

But then there are others who are moved by compassion when they see the need. They cannot ignore the cries of these tortured individuals living in a nightmare. They find a way to help in any way they can. These are the Samaritans of our day, the ones who truly love their neighbor. For example, any victim who threatens to leave or testifies against her pimp is often "greenlighted," meaning that they are marked for death. In one case, they poured gasoline over a victim who was "greenlighted" and burned her alive.[17]

[17] Susan Patterson, *How You Can Fight Human Trafficking* (Irvine, CA: Through God's Grace, 2014), 7.

In response to these threats to a victim, a group of men, Bikers Against Trafficking, escort the witness into and out of the courthouse, while the pimps invite their "friends" to sit in the courtroom and glare at the witness to intimidate them into not testifying. So the bikers are there to intimidate the pimps. It works, and this is a wonderful example of using what you have or what you can do to make a difference.[18]

But it does not have to take being a part of a biker gang. Anyone can make a difference. Loving your neighbor can start with something as simple as becoming educated on the evils of human trafficking. Then, after being educated, even learning to a simple degree, one can volunteer with anti-trafficking organizations in their community. Help can even be as simple as recognizing the signs. In the United States, if you see something that "does not look right," one number to call is (888) 373-7888. The call can be made anonymously. But this is just one way among a multitude of other ways to be a Good Samaritan and love your neighbor as Jesus taught.

Far more women than men are involved in anti-trafficking work. Are the men passing on the other side? It is usually fathers with daughters who are the most passionate about the cause. And fathers do have an important role. Special Victims Unit police say that the way for fathers to make their daughters less vulnerable to becoming trafficking victims is to validate how beautiful they are and that they love them. Fathers also need to be role models for their sons on how to treat women.[19] There are many men's groups for men to get involved with, such as www.joinonemillionmen.org, which is dedicated to helping other men become porn-free.

---

[18] Patterson, *Fight Human Trafficking,* 7.

[19] Patterson, *Fight Human Trafficking,* 83.

A post on Men Against Prostitution and Human Trafficking (MENAPAT) says it best:

> At first, it doesn't make sense. When it comes to prostitution, human trafficking, and commercial sexual exploitation, men are the problem. That's the truth, plain and simple. Men are the traffickers, the pimps, the modern-day slave traders, the customers, the johns. In short, men are the bad guys. That's why we are gathering up a network of men who have had enough. As men, we are taking a stand against anyone who exploits women and girls. Now is the time to declare our strength and virtue; to use our unique abilities as men to help end this horrible crime. Yes, men are the problem. But together, we must be part of the solution.[20]

Jesus recognized in the lawyer's question the human tendency to attempt to absolve ourselves of responsibility by claiming that certain people are not our responsibility. With His final command to "go and do likewise," Jesus erases the boundaries the lawyer was trying to draw and makes the point that those who truly participate in the life of the Kingdom fully live out the law by "being neighbors"—bringing shalom to all who experience brokenness around them.[21] It is time to stop passing on the other side and, with a heart of compassion, take the Samaritan's role, using what means and opportunity we have available to us to make a difference—even if it is one victim—and to love our neighbor as Jesus taught.

But the answer is not to shame people into getting involved. We have often seen people browbeaten by church leaders who ask, "What is wrong with you people? Don't you care?" And, of course, throw in that "one day you will stand before God and be given an account for your lack of love and involvement," and you have a perfect recipe for

---

[20] Patterson, *Fight Human Trafficking,* 85–86.

[21] Abraham George, blog, *Human Trafficking and the Response of the Global Church* (Orlando, FL: The Lausanne Movement, 2014), 1. https://lausanne.org/content/lga/2014-01/human-trafficking-and-the-response-of-the-global-church.

involvement through fear and shame. However, I have learned that this level of participation rarely lasts, and even when it does, it is out of obligation, not motivation. The best course of action is to encourage our brothers and sisters to follow Christ, and He will lead His sheep where they belong.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

Few legends in the history of the United States that have gained as much notoriety and popularity as the Underground Railroad.[1] This fabled institution describes the brave abolitionists who used a well-organized transportation system to move scores of runaway passengers from slavery to eventual freedom. The runaway slaves were pursued by angry and motivated slave hunters, and they only avoided capture due to the skill and daring of their conductors. These were courageous people who "moved in silent, spontaneous revolt against a monstrous injustice."[2]

The risks were great. The abolitionists, known as conductors, faced the slander of their pro-slavery neighbors. They also faced court action if their activities were discovered. In addition, the Fugitive Slave Acts provided for the seizure and return of runaway slaves who escaped from one state to another or to federal territory.[3] According to one Iowa historian, "Generally, the train masters kept no dispatch books or records of train schedules or passengers, lest such material be used against them."[4]

---

[1] Larry Gara, *The Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1961), 1. http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt2jcgg8.

[2] Gara, *The Liberty Line*, 2.

[3] Britannica, "Fugitive Slave Acts," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, last modified October 21, 2022, https://www.britannica.com/event/Fugitive-Slave-Acts.

[4] Jacob Van Ek, "Underground Railroad in Iowa," *The Palimpsest* 2, no. 5, 142–43.

A biography of Harriet Tubman describes the Underground Railroad as an institution that was "so much at the core of the American problem that it called forth an ignominious Fugitive Slave Law" and "was one of the greatest forces which brought on the Civil War, and thus destroyed slavery."[5]

This chapter explores the story of the Underground Railroad from several perspectives. I examine the issues that led to its emergence and discuss its origins. I highlight several of the key figures in the movement and trace its expansion. I also look at the codes and symbols used to maintain secrecy, as well as the inherent dangers. In addition, I examine the movement patterns used by runaway slaves. Finally, I reflect on the model and consider how it can be applied to the rescue of those trapped in the modern-day slavery of human trafficking.

The Underground Railroad was not a railroad, nor did it run underground. Rather, it was a community of men and women who risked their lives to help slaves escape bondage. By necessity, the Underground Railroad was a loosely organized institution. Its members were lawbreakers. People who helped runaway slaves could be sent to jail or suffer even worse punishments. The members of the Underground Railroad knew few other members. As described above, they used railroad terms when talking about their activities. Runaways were called "passengers." Those who helped passengers were called "conductors." Houses where escapees could rest were called "stations," and station owners were "stationmasters."[6]

---

[5] Earl Conrad, *Harriet Tubman* (Washington, DC: Associated Publishers, 1943), 1.

[6] R. C. Stein and C. Taylor, *The Underground Railroad* (New York, NY: Enslow Publishing, 2015), 3.

Because no records were kept, it is not known how many men and women served on the Underground Railroad, nor is it known how many slaves the Railroad helped escape. The Underground Railroad is a heroic chapter in American history. Its members were Black and white men and women. The organization helped to destroy the nation's greatest evil—slavery. Stories of the Underground Railroad and the dangers faced by the workers and escapees have been told for generations.

For over two hundred years, Americans have prided themselves on being, above all, a free country. The nation's founders sought to create a union in which "all men are created equal," as the Declaration of Independence states. However, that claim did not apply to the legions of slaves who worked on farms and plantations throughout the country. The reasons for this contradiction lie deep in the history of the United States.

Reports of cruel treatment abound in slave journals and diaries. Slaves were whipped, clubbed, burned, and tied up in painful positions. Even "kind" masters often resorted to the whip to discipline a slave.[7] In the years leading up to 1830, the system that would become the Underground Railroad lacked a firm organization and even a name. In addition, the slaves who trekked north were afraid to ask or help from anyone along the way. It was impossible to tell who would prove to be a friend or foe.[8]

The legend of the Underground Railroad tells of intrepid abolitionists who used a well-organized transportation system to move large numbers of passengers to the promised land of freedom. The fugitives were often hotly pursued and almost always

---

[7] Stein and Taylor, *The Underground Railroad*, 8.

[8] Stein and Taylor, *The Underground Railroad*, 8.

escaped capture because of the ingenuity and daring of the conductors. All was done with the utmost secrecy.[9]

Early on, the moral sensibilities of many people in the North were awakened to the enormity of the crime of slavery, and measures were taken to abolish it. The first slaves brought to this country were sold from a Dutch ship at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619. There were twenty of them. From that time until 1776, 300,000 were imported. It was resolved at the Continental Congress that no more slaves should be brought into the country, but with the adoption of the Constitution, Congress was forbidden to abolish the slave trade until 1808.[10]

In the meantime, antislavery societies were formed in several states, and Benjamin Franklin was president of one such organization. The Quakers persistently protested against human bondage and petitioned the Convention to provide for its abolition in the Constitution. It was believed at the time that human bondage would end in a few years. In this case, the philanthropists were disappointed, as the rapid growth of the organization would show. In 1790, according to the census, the slaves numbered 697,897, which was more than double the number at the beginning of the Revolutionary War.

Between the 1820s and 1860s, an untold number of enslaved African Americans fled to freedom via multiple land and water routes. Slaves from the border states stretching along the Ohio River had a greater chance of success due to their proximity to free soil in the North. Many continued on to Canada. Slaves from Texas crossed the Rio

---

[9] Gara, *The Liberty Line*, 1.

[10] Eber Pettit, *Sketches in the History of the Underground Railroad* (New York, NY: Open Road Integrated Media, 2015), 1.

Grande into Mexico. Slaves from Georgia, South Carolina, and Alabama escaped to live with the Seminole Indians in Florida or the Caribbean. Some groups of fugitives set up self-sufficient “maroon societies” that lived in remote areas, such as the Great Dismal Swamp along the Virginia–North Carolina border.[11]

A secret, loosely organized system run by abolitionists of both races, the Underground Railroad helped thousands of southern slaves escape to freedom in the northern states, Canada, and Mexico. This series of safe houses and way stations was "underground" because it was illegal and subversive, and it was named the "Railroad" after the up-and-coming locomotives of the day. It is almost impossible to study the Underground Railroad without also understanding the reasons behind it: slavery and why it flourished in America, the hardships of enslaved Africans, and the laws that divided the nation.[12]

Origins

The Atlantic slave trade that brought unwilling Africans to the Western Hemisphere was one part of a long history of international trade in goods and people in Europe, Africa, North and South America, and even Asia. Between 1450 and 1850, approximately twelve million Africans were transported westward across the Atlantic. Of

[11] Tricia Martineau Wagner, *It Happened on the Underground Railroad: Remarkable Events That Shaped History*, 2nd ed. (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2014), 1.

[12] C. Marshall, 2001. “*The Underground Railroad*,” School Library Journal, Plain City, OH, 47:29-31, 2.

that number, only about 5% were brought to British North America and, later, to the United States, most of them arriving between 1680 and 1808.[13]

As previously mentioned, while most slave escapes were to the free states of the North and to Canada, there were runaways to Spanish Florida, Spanish Mexico, and the later Mexican Republic. Although the number of runaways never threatened to destabilize slavery, there were very serious consequences for American diplomacy, prompting a desire to acquire Spanish territory on the continent to secure the national borders and prevent slave escapes. Furthermore, the majority of assistance to runaways came from slaves and free Blacks, and the greatest responsibility for providing shelter, financial support, and guidance to successful runaways came from the organized efforts of northern free Blacks.[14]

The early antislavery movement and examples of resistance to slavery from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are the immediate precursors of the Underground Railroad. These include the early abolition societies (1780–1812) that existed in almost every state and the religious antislavery movement that began in the 1700s. The Society of Friends (Quakers) was instrumental in the antislavery movement in both the early and late periods, but other denominations and the political philosophies of the Enlightenment also contributed to the antislavery movement. Free Blacks in every state made political and economic efforts to promote emancipation, end the slave trade, and ultimately abolish slavery in the new American republic.

---

[13] Marie Tyler McGraw, *Researching and Interpreting the Underground Railroad* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, US Department of the Interior, 1997), 1. https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/ugrr/exugrr2.htm.

[14] McGraw, *Underground Railroad,* 2.

Also among the precursors to the Underground Railroad were African American war-related efforts to leave the United States during the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, to sue for freedom on the basis of military service in those wars, and to organize slave rebellions based on belief in republican liberty, such as the Stono Rebellion (1739) and Gabriel's Conspiracy (1800).[15]

In much of the North, the end of legal slaveholding came with the adoption of new state constitutions after the American Revolution. Most northern states adopted gradual abolition plans, which could take a long time; it could mean that children would serve until they were thirty, or that older people would remain in bondage if it appeared that they would need supported from the state. In addition, the First National Congress in 1787 passed the Northwest Ordinance, which prohibited the introduction of slaves into the territory west of the Ohio River. This area, which became the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin, was permanently free. The belief that slavery was a moral evil and the hope, widely held in the North and South during the early republic, that the slavery issue might somehow resolve itself as the American economy changed and as slaveholders were persuaded of the evils of slavery, evaporated as slaves became more valuable and after the bitter congressional fight over the admission of Missouri into the Union as a slave state in 1820. It was, as Thomas Jefferson claimed, "a firebell in the night."[16]

In the years between 1820 and 1865, most antislavery advocates abandoned their hopes of gradual emancipation and made the immediate abolition of slavery their goal.

---

[15] McGraw, *Underground Railroad,* 3.

[16] Cited in McGraw, *Underground Railroad,* 3.

The term "Underground Railroad" had no meaning to the generations before the first rails and locomotives in the 1820s, but many earlier events were precursors. By the 1800s, forces ranging from the national Constitution to local slave patrols in the South were all focused on preventing escape.

Fugitives moved from one station to the next at night, crossing rivers and swamps and hiking mountains. Most traveled on foot and hid in barns or out-of-sight places such as basements and cupboards. Committees were formed in large cities such as Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. These committees raised funds to help fugitives settle by providing temporary shelter and job referrals.[17]

Key Figures

Harriet Tubman is perhaps the best-known figure related to the Underground Railroad. By some accounts, nineteen or more rescue trips to the South and helped more than 300 people escape slavery. Her life and character are an outstanding example of selfless dedication to freedom and the abolition of slavery. More recent scholarship has determined that she made approximately thirteen trips, and, more significantly, her work with the Union army in the Department of the South resulted in the liberation of well over 300 enslaved persons.[18]

Tubman was born a slave in Bucktown, near Cambridge, Maryland, around 1820 and was named Araminta Ross. In her early life, she came to be known by her mother's

---

[17] Harriet Tubman Historical Society, *What Was the Underground Railroad?* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts History Club, 2023), 1. http://www.harriet-tubman.org/underground-railroad.

[18] Underground Railroad Education Center, *Key People* (Albany, NY: Underground Railroad education Center, 2023), 1. https://undergroundrailroadhistory.org/key-people/.

name, Harriet. At the age of thirteen, an incident occurred in which she attempted to interfere with the punishment of another enslaved person. The angry slave master hit her on the head with a two-pound weight, which fractured her skull and caused her to have blackouts for the rest of her life. She married John Tubman, a free Black man, in 1844. She escaped from enslavement in 1849 and went to Philadelphia, where she vowed to return for other members of her family and to help others escape. She made her first trip back to the South after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 and returned a total of thirteen times.[19]

Amy Kirby Post, a married mother of four, epitomized radical activism in nineteenth-century America. She championed a wide range of causes and worked earnestly to make connections between issues, individuals, and movements. Her activist worlds demonstrate the importance of egalitarian, multiracial, and mixed-gender movements for social change in the nineteenth century, and her contributions illustrate the central role that radical Quakers played as both public advocates and role models for a just society.[20]

Post was remembered for her friendship with Frederick Douglass, her involvement in the Underground Railroad, and her support of women's suffrage. While some obituaries captured her understanding of these movements as being deeply intertwined and interdependent, others highlighted her work as either an abolitionist or a

[19] Underground Railroad Education Center, "Key People."

[20] N. A. Hewitt, *Radical Friend: Amy Kirby Post and Her Activist Worlds* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2018), 15.

suffragist. A few even portrayed her as a follower rather than a leader of the women's rights movement.[21]

The small number of notable women in the Underground Railroad is a reflection of the primarily domestic role of women in the antebellum period. Some women, such as Catharine Coffin and Jean Rankin, the wives of prominent conductors Levi Coffin and John Rankin, played a key part in Underground Railroad operations, such as preparing meals and providing accommodations. On at least one occasion, Catharine Coffin even forwarded a fugitive slave to another location in the City of Cincinnati.[22]

Richard Allen, born a slave, became the founder and first bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. After the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act in 1793, Allen's Free African Society began petitioning state and national governments to end slavery and the slave trade. His activity led to suspicions that he was aiding fugitive slaves, which, in fact, was happening at his church.[23]

Hiram Wilson became the most noted missionary serving the fugitive slave community in Canada. In 1837, he was sent to Canada by the American Anti-Slavery Society to investigate the condition of former fugitive slaves. In 1841, he conceived the plan to establish the British and American Institute, an industrial school, to train former fugitive slaves.[24]

---

[21] Hewitt, *Radical Friend*, 16.

[22] Tom Calarco, *People of the Underground Railroad: A Biographical Dictionary* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2008), 1.

[23] Calarco, *People of the Underground Railroad*,1.

[24] Hewitt, *Radical Friend*, 19.

Blacksmith Elijah Anderson was one of the most active conductors along the Underground Railroad corridor from Madison, Indiana, to Sandusky, Ohio. The light-skinned Anderson traveled freely between the North and South and had no fear of going into Kentucky to aid runaway slaves. In the later years of his Underground activities, he often took fugitive slaves by train, posing as their master.[25]

Additional noteworthy supporters of the Railroad included Levi Coffin, William Still, Thomas Garrett, Samuel Burris, William Lloyd Garrison, Sojourner Truth, John Brown, Anderson Ruffin Abbott, Henry Brown, Obadiah Bush, Asa Drury, Matilda Joslyn Gage, Samuel Green, Gerrit Smith, Lucretia Coffin Mott, and Bishop Jermain Wesley Loguen.

Expansion

Although estimates of the number of people who escaped through the Underground Railroad between 1820 and 1861 vary widely, the most often cited figure is approximately 100,000. The Underground Railroad operated as a series of networks. The journey north was extremely long, and the Underground Railroad provided depots and safe houses along the way. Those who led the runaway slaves north did so in stages.[26]

No conductor knew the entire route; they were responsible for the short routes from station to station. Once the "cargo" reached another station, it would be passed on to the next conductor until the entire route had been traversed. This limited knowledge

---

[25] Hewitt, *Radical Friend*, 19.

[26] Cassandra Waggoner, *The Underground Railroad (1820–1861),* BlackPast.org. Seattle, WA. https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/underground-railroad-1820-1861/.

protected both the fugitive slaves and the integrity of the routes, which sometimes extended over 1,000 miles.[27]

There could be no "Underground Railroad" until the actual railroads became known to the American public in the 1830s and 1840s. There had certainly been slave escapes before that period, but they were not described by any kind of railroad moniker. The term also highlights a specific geographic orientation. Antebellum railroads existed primarily in the North–home to about 70 percent of the nation's 30,000 miles of track by 1860. Slaves fled in every direction of the compass, but the metaphor had its greatest impact in the communities closest to the nation's whistle-stops.

Anxious fugitives and their allies now fought back with greater ferocity. Frederick Douglass himself became more militant. In September 1851, he helped a former slave named William Parker escape to Canada after Parker had spearheaded a resistance in Christiana, Pennsylvania, that left a Maryland slaveholder dead and federal authorities in disarray.

The next year, in a fiery speech in Pittsburgh, the famous orator stepped up the rhetorical attack, vowing, "The only way to make the Fugitive Slave Law a dead letter is to make half a dozen or more dead kidnappers."[28] This level of defiance was not uncommon in the antislavery North and soon imperiled both federal statutes and the national union. Between 1850 and 1861, only about 350 fugitive slave cases were prosecuted under the notoriously tough law, and none in the abolitionist-friendly New

---

[27] Waggoner, "Underground Railroad."

[28] Frederick Douglass, *The Fugitive Slave Law: Speech to the National Free Soil Convention in Pittsburgh, August 11,1852* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester, Frederick Douglass Project, 2018), http://www.lib.rochester.edu/index.cfm?PAGE=4385.

England states after 1854. White Southerners complained bitterly, while abolitionists grew more emboldened.[29]

Codes and Symbols

The Underground Railroad symbols were secret codes, words, signals, and signs used by slaves who were escaping slavery and those who helped them in this very dangerous activity. The success of the Underground Railroad was dependent on complete secrecy.[30]

Passwords were used to ensure that fugitives were genuine. Messages were sent by drumming stones together. The hooting of an owl was used to convey messages. Certain songs were sung as symbols of Underground Railroad members. For example, gospel songs like “Steal Away, Steal Away, Steal Away to Jesus,” “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,” and “Wade in the Water” were used to indicate that an escape plan was about to be carried out or to remind people to travel through water to avoid detection. The song "Follow the Drinking Gourd" was a reminder to follow the North Star, which always led the way to freedom. "All clear" signals were conveyed in safe houses using a lighted lantern placed in a specific location. Knocks on doors followed a coded series of taps to confirm identity. Certain items, such as quilts, were hung on a clothesline.[31]

---

[29] Matthew Pinsker, “The Underground Railroad and the Coming of War,” *The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History*, 2009, https://ap.gilderlehrman.org/essay/underground-railroad-and-coming-war.

[30] Linda Alchin, “The Underground Railroad Symbols,” *Siteseen Limited*, 2017, https://www.american-historama.org/1829-1841-jacksonian-era/underground-railroad-symbols.htm.

[31] Alchin, “Underground Railroad Symbols.”

Symbols were used to indicate routes, such as goose symbols flying north. Bear paw symbols conveyed the message to take a mountain route. Bow tie symbols meant that slaves had to change their clothes. Symbols of broken bowls were used as directional symbols along the escape route. Log cabin symbols told slaves to look for that symbol on their journey to freedom. Box symbols indicated that it was time to pack up and be ready for escape. Patterns called monkey wrenches were symbols that reminded slaves to prepare for the journey and to take weapons or tools that would help them on their journey. And North Star symbols pointed the way to freedom.[32]

"Canaan" was a biblical term used to mean Canada. "Heaven" was the word used to describe the destination of a fugitive, usually referring to Canada. "Preachers" were Abolitionists or leaders of the "Underground Railroad." The "River Jordan" was the secret code word for the Ohio River. "Shepherds" were alternative names for conductors, meaning those who guided fugitive slaves between safe houses. "Moses" was the code name of Harriet Tubman, the most famous conductor.[33]

Code phrases included "The river bank makes a mighty good road," which was a reminder to travel by water. "The wind blows from the south today" was an alert that fugitive slaves were in the area. "The dead trees will show you the way" was a reminder that moss grows on the north side of dead trees, useful when the stars are not visible. "Left foot, peg foot" was a description of a certain conductor. "The friend of a friend sent me" was a password used by runaway slaves.[34]

---

[32] Alchin, "Underground Railroad Symbols."

[33] Alchin, "Underground Railroad Symbols."

[34] Alchin, "Underground Railroad Symbols."

End of the Railroad

On January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, liberating slaves in the Confederate states. After the Civil War ended, the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution was passed in 1865, which abolished slavery throughout the United States and marked the end of the Underground Railroad.

Comparisons with Today's Anti-Trafficking Movement

Modern slavery differs from historical slavery in several ways: There are more slaves than ever before, but they are a smaller proportion of the human race. No nation defends slavery anymore, and slavery is illegal everywhere, so it requires corruption and crime to continue. The power of the slave owner is always subject to the power of the state. Slavery can only continue to exist if governments allow it, and some writers claim that government corruption is a leading cause of the persistence of slavery. Slaves are cheaper than ever and can generate high economic returns. Modern slavery is very cheap, and Kevin Bales has argued that this has made modern slavery even worse than that of the Atlantic slave trade.[35]

Just as there were courageous people in the nineteenth century in the United States who "moved in silent, spontaneous revolt against a monstrous injustice" to combat slavery through the Underground Railroad, there are many today who have formed a similar resistance movement against the horrors of human trafficking.

---

[35] British Broadcasting Corporation, *Modern Slavery* (London, UK: BBC, 2022), 1. https://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/slavery/modern/modern_1.shtml.

Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery in which traffickers use force, fraud, and coercion to control victims for the purpose of engaging in commercial sex acts or labor services against their will. Sex trafficking has been found in a wide variety of venues within the sex industry, including residential brothels, escort services, fake massage businesses, strip clubs, and street prostitution. Labor trafficking has been found in diverse labor settings, including domestic work, small businesses, large farms, and factories.[36]

Human trafficking affects individuals across the world, including in the United States, and is commonly regarded as one of the most pressing human rights issues of our time. Human trafficking affects every community in the United States—across all ages, genders, ethnicities, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Sex trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purposes of a commercial sex act, where the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or where the person induced to perform such an act is under eighteen years of age.[37] Labor trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purposes of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.[38]

---

[36] National Human Trafficking Hotline, Administration of Children and Families (New York, NY: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2021), 1. https://humantraffickinghotline.org/en/type-trafficking/human-trafficking.

[37] National Human Trafficking Hotline, "Human Trafficking."

[38] National Human Trafficking Hotline, "Human Trafficking."

Human trafficking is a market-oriented criminal industry that, like the drugs or arms trade, is based on the principles of supply and demand. Many factors make children and adults vulnerable to human trafficking. However, human trafficking does not only exist because many people are vulnerable to exploitation. Rather, human trafficking is fueled by the demand for cheap labor, services, and commercial sex. Traffickers victimize others in their efforts to profit from the existing demand. In order to solve the problem of human trafficking once and for all, these demand-driven factors must be addressed, and the general market incentives for high profit and low risk that traffickers currently exploit must be changed. If left unchecked, human trafficking will continue to thrive in an environment where traffickers can make significant financial gains with a relatively low risk of being caught or losing profits.

Therefore, communities can help curb sex trafficking in their communities by not buying sex and not participating in the commercial sex industry. Community members can use online tools like Slavery Footprint to see how human trafficking occurs in the services and products they consume, purchase fairly traded and survivor-made products, and hold their favorite brands accountable for fair labor practices. Together with the efforts of service providers, prosecutors, and law enforcement, these community efforts can help reduce the demand for sex and labor trafficking.[39]

Examples Of Resistance Organizations

The Exodus Road is an anti-trafficking organization that works with law enforcement to end human trafficking and modern-day slavery across the world. They partner with governments and communities to provide education on human trafficking

[39] National Human Trafficking Hotline, "Human Trafficking."

awareness. They also have a program where they partner with local police forces to help make arrests of traffickers and rescue people from trafficking situations.[40]

Joy to the World is an organization that provides anti-trafficking programs for vulnerable people in Thailand. According to the Global Slavery Index, Thailand is one of the twenty-five countries in the world with the highest number of people living in modern slavery. Joy to the World is committed to eradicating human trafficking in Thailand by helping vulnerable people get out of dangerous situations. They have a variety of human trafficking prevention programs that provide people with a steady income, education, and community.

International Justice Mission (IJM) is a humanitarian organization that also focuses on eliminating human trafficking. They have initiatives to rescue victims of trafficking and take care of them after they have been rescued. IJM also has grassroots volunteers all over the world who actively work to make the world a safer place through education, awareness, and advocacy.[41]

The Polaris Project fights human trafficking and sex slavery in North America by compiling data, analytics, and statistics and using them to support at-risk individuals, communities, and governments. They hold the largest dataset on human trafficking in North America and operate the US National Human Trafficking Hotline. Their overall goal is to use their knowledge and resources to stop the systems and industries that profit

---

[40] Joy to the World Foundation, "5 Organizations Fighting Human Trafficking," *Joy to the World Foundation Thailand*, 2023, https://www.joytotheworldthailand.org/organizations-fighting-human-trafficking.

[41] Joy to the World Foundation, "5 Organizations Fighting."

from modern-day slavery. They also place a high value on centering survivors and giving a voice to the victims and survivors of human trafficking.[42]

Love164 is an anti-trafficking organization that specifically fights against child trafficking in the US, UK, and the Philippines. They have reached over 3,500 children with their survivor care projects and over 63,000 children with their trafficking prevention program. Love146 works specifically to care for at-risk youth, including LGBT youth and those vulnerable to sex trafficking. Their goal is to take care of the survivors of child trafficking and prevent any other children from being trafficked.[43]

Conclusion

Human trafficking today takes many forms, such as labor exploitation, sex trafficking, domestic servitude, organ harvesting, child soldiers, and forced marriage. The exploitation of African people into slavery in our nation's history has similarities to human trafficking today. While slavery was legal in the past, today's slavery exists in the shadows and exploits more people than when it was legal. Combating this evil requires collaboration across sectors, including government and nongovernmental agencies, in areas such as human rights, labor and employment, health and services, and law enforcement. Today's antislavery movement has much to learn from the Underground Railroad's multi-jurisdictional, multi-sector collaborative strategies, which achieved a remarkable record of success without automobiles, cell phones, or social media and which involved collaboration between different agencies and sectors. With the collective

[42] Joy to the World Foundation, "5 Organizations Fighting."

[43] Joy to the World Foundation, "5 Organizations Fighting."

will and ability to work together and leverage the various resources at all levels, we can put an end to this horrific practice in our time.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

In this Theological Foundations paper, I discuss the topic of compassion and how it relates to my anti-trafficking project. Compassion is sensitivity to the emotional aspects of the suffering of others. It is described as a social feeling that motivates people to do what they can to alleviate the physical, mental, or emotional pain of others and themselves. When based on concepts such as fairness, justice, and interdependence, it can be considered partially rational. Compassion involves “feeling for another” and is a precursor to empathy, the ability to "feel as another" (as opposed to sympathy, the "feeling toward another"). In common parlance, active compassion is the desire to alleviate the suffering of another. Joshua T. Searle argues that Christianity must not be understood as a religion of private salvation but as a gospel movement of universal compassion that transforms the world through the power of God's truth.[1]

Problem Statement and Hypothesis

Human trafficking is defined by the United States and the United Nations as compelling someone into any form of work or service through force, fraud, or coercion. Human trafficking is enslavement—the control and exploitation of one person by

[1] Joshua T. Searle, *Theology After Christendom: Forming Prophets for a Post-Christian World* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018), 1.

another. I aimed to create a focus group to educate people in my context on sex and labor trafficking in Edison, New Jersey, with the goal of creating community involvement in addressing human trafficking in the township of Edison. By educating people in my context, I can then move on to educating people in my community as a whole, and once that is done, I can determine if there is sufficient commitment to address the issue citywide, such as the creating of a task force.

Susan Wessel believes that compassion is the soul of Christianity. It is connected to every aspect of life, and its presence or absence shapes one's experience of the world. In support of this ideal, the Gospels record numerous instances of Jesus exercising compassion to heal those whose suffering he witnessed. Early Christian preachers urged their congregations to follow Jesus's example by compassionately embracing their fellow human beings and by providing the churches with the financial means to care for the sick and poor.[2]

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, the Samaritan had a number of reasons for not helping the beaten man on the road to Jericho. He was a Samaritan, and the victim was most likely a Jew. The Jews had "no dealings with the Samaritans" (John 4:9). He was on a journey, most likely business. He might reasonably have used the excuse that he had "places to be and things to do." It might even have been dangerous in that area. But the text reveals an important difference between the Samaritan and the priest and the Levite. The Samaritan "had compassion" or the victim. And when someone has compassion, they find a way to get involved and make a difference. In the words of Pema

[2] Susan Wessel, *On Compassion, Healing, Suffering, and the Purpose of the Emotional Life* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), 1.

Chodron, "Compassion is not a relationship between the healer and the wounded. It's a relationship between equals. Only when we know our own darkness well can we be present with the darkness of others. Compassion becomes real when we recognize our shared humanity."[3]

My approach to the subject of compassion begins by examining its meaning and use in scripture. Next, I review examples of the theme as presented by the Church from its earliest days through the present. I also explore the impact of Christian compassion on society, particularly in shaping public policy. Finally, I discuss the essential role of compassion in the fight against human trafficking, which is the focus of my doctoral project.

Biblical Analysis

Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary presents compassion in its Old and New Testament meanings. The Hebrew word for compassion is *rehem*. In its verb form, it means "to have compassion, be merciful, and pity."[4] The noun form is translated as "bowels; womb; mercy." One use would be Psalm 25:6, "Remember, O Lord, Your tender mercies and Your lovingkindnesses." Another representative usage is Isaiah 54:7–8, "with great mercies will I gather you. . . . But with everlasting kindness will I have

[3] Pema Chodron, *The Places That Scare You: A Guide to Fearlessness in Difficult Times* (Boulder, CO: Shambhala Classics, 2002), 1.

[4] W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, and William White, V*ine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1985), 116.

mercy on you, says the LORD, your Redeemer." This is the heart of salvation by the suffering Servant-Messiah.[5]

In the Greek form of the New Testament, the term compassion is *oikterio,* which in its verb form is translated as "to have pity, a feeling of distress through the ills of others," and is used for God's compassion. Another Greek term used is *splanchnizomai, which means* "to be moved as to one's inwards, to be moved with compassion, to yearn with compassion." This term is frequently recorded of Christ toward the multitude and toward individual sufferers.[6] An example is Matthew 9:36: "But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd." Another example is Matt. 14:14: "And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude, and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick."

Lewis Sperry Chafer says, Christ was in every respect the manifestation of the Father (John 1:18). The Psalmist declares, "As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear him (103:13)," and in this, the Lord Jesus Christ was a perfect representation of the Father's heart. All His miracles of healing and restoration were prompted by His compassion.[7]

Another Greek term used in the New Testament is *sumpatheo*, "to suffer with another, to be affected similarly."[8] The English word "sympathy" is derived from this

---

[5] Vine, Unger, and White, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*, 116.

[6] Vine, Unger, and White, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*, 117.

[7] Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, Vols. 3 & 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1993), 22.

[8] Vine, Unger, and White, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*, 117.

term. It can be found in Hebrews 4:15 (NKJV): “For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin.”

Based on a comparative use in the Old and New Testaments, the concept of compassion originates from the nature of God. It has its origin in the heart, the seat of emotion, and is translated in the New King James Version as “tender mercies” (Col. 3:12). It creates a sense of concern for the needs of others. Since the innermost parts are involved, it inevitably leads to action by the one whose heart has been broken and poured out, ensuring that whatever can be done will be done will be done.

Compassion in Church History

Waldo Beach and H. Richard Niebuhr noted that the early church was most known for the assistance provided to fellow Christians. They write, “The most striking quality of the Christians was their *agape* in the care of their own group, as seen in their assistance to the bereft, to orphans and old people, in the care for prisoners and the sick and those condemned to the mines, and in their hospitality and the sharing of economic goods.”

In the earliest Christian writings after the New Testament, however, the pursuit of justice on a broader scale is evident. In the Epistle of Barnabas, the author (not Barnabas) speaks out against the prevailing Roman practice of exposing children: “That we may avoid all injustice and impiety, we have been taught that to expose the newly born is the work of wicked men—first of all because we observe that almost all [foundlings], boys as well as girls, are brought up for prostitution.”

The author of the *Didache* writes, “Give to everyone that asks, without looking for any repayment, for it is the Father’s good pleasure that we should share His gracious bounty with all men.” This points to showing mercy to those around you, not just the Christian community. This attitude is described by Tertullian, “One in mind and soul, we do not hesitate to share our earthly goods with one another. All things are common among us but our wives.” This he included in his *Apology* for Christians. However, Tertullian makes it clear that their acts of mercy were not focused *solely* on Christians: “We have no respect of persons in doing good, because by so doing we do good to ourselves, who catch at no applause or reward from men, but from God only, who keeps a faithful register of our good works, and has ample rewards in store for this universal charity; for we have the same good wishes for emperors as for our nearest friends.”

Based on historical evidence, neighbor love was a central aspect of the life of the early Church. Largely because of their position as (usually) lower-class individuals outside the usual power structures, it seems that a great deal of effort was often directed within their faith community before pursuing mercy ministry on a public scale.

The Emperor Julian, often called “The Apostate,” made an active attempt to remove Christianity from the Roman Empire in the middle of the fourth century. In his diatribe against Christians, he wrote: “The impious Galileans not only feed their own poor but ours as well, welcoming them into their agape; they attract them, as children are attracted, with cakes.” Obviously, there is some sarcasm here, but the point should be well taken: Christians had a significant impact on their society *because* they did mercy ministries.

The earliest known document organizing a relief effort for the poor is found in the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, which is included in the *Apostolic Constitutions* and dates to the third century. The early Christians had a common fund to which they contributed voluntarily, either on a specific day of the month or whenever they wished to contribute. Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem in the fifth century, "sold treasures and ornaments of the church for the relief of a starving people, and Ethelwold, bishop of Winchester from the tenth century, sold all of the gold and silver vessels of his cathedral to relieve the poor who were starving during a famine." Callistus of Rome gave refuge to abandoned children. Benignus of Dijon, a second-century Christian who was martyred in Epagn, "nursed, supported, and protected a number of deformed and crippled children that had been saved from death after failed abortions and exposures." Afra of Augsburg developed a ministry to prisoners, thieves, smugglers, pirates, runaway slaves, and brigands. Abandonment of unwanted children was frequent in ancient Rome.[9]

For Augustine, bishop of the North African city of Hippo, seeking the common good was a demonstration of Christ's command to demonstrate neighbor love: "Now you love yourself suitably when you love God better than yourself. What, then, you aim at in yourself you must aim at in your neighbor, namely, that he may love God with a perfect affection.... From this precept proceed the duties of human society, in which it is hard to keep from error. But the first thing to aim at is, that we should be benevolent, that is, that we should cherish no malice and no evil design against another. For man is the nearest neighbor of man." (Augustine, *Of the Morals of the Catholic Church*)

---

[9] Andrew Alleman, in blog, "*Christianity: A History of Charity and Compassion* (Minneapolis, MN: Self-Evident Ministries, 2024), 1.

In the same work, he urges his readers to care for the physical needs of their neighbors, drawing an all-encompassing circle around the needs of the human body: "Man, then, as viewed by his fellowman, is a rational soul with a mortal and earthly body in its service. Therefore, he who loves his neighbor does good partly to the man's body, and partly to his soul. What benefits the body is called medicine; what benefits the soul discipline" (Augustine, *Of the Morals of the Catholic Church*).

St. Basil of Caesarea and St. Chrysostom of Constantinople began the construction of orphanotrophia (early orphanages) in the late fourth century, often near cathedrals with other hospices.[10] What we can see in this period of Church history is that there was a theological impetus toward mercy ministry. Augustine, who remains a central figure in the development of Christian doctrine, balanced the need for evangelism with the need to meet the physical needs of the people. Far from being a recent invention of the millennial evangelicals, mercy ministry has been a core Christian practice.

The medieval period runs from the fall of Rome to the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. Monasticism was a leading movement in the implementation of mercy ministry in the Middle Ages. Thomas Aquinas drew on Scripture, Church tradition, and Aristotelian philosophy to argue: "Justice is a habit whereby a man renders to each one his due by constant and perpetual will."

Thus, internal holiness is not the only goal. According to Aquinas, "[J]ustice is an external operation, in so far as either it or the thing we use by it is made proportionate to some other person to whom we are related by justice. . . . Therefore the proper act of justice is nothing else than to render to each one his own."

---

[10] Alleman, "Christianity."

In 1206, Giovanni Bernadone, the twenty-three-year-old son of a wealthy merchant, founded a religious order whose brothers worked for the poor and the lepers, renouncing their worldly goods to live in poverty like those they served. Bernadone, known to us now as St. Francis of Assisi, is remembered for declaring: "Grant me the treasure of sublime poverty: permit the distinctive sign of our order to be that it does not possess anything of its own beneath the sun, for the glory of your name, and that it has no other patrimony than begging."[11]

In addition to these sources, there is much more evidence of the Church's active work in service to the poor. Caring for the poor was a central pillar of the Church's doctrine. At times, it has been questioned whether it was also consistently central to the practice of the church. However, there is clear evidence that during this period, the ministry of mercy was seen as essential to being a Christian.

The age of the Reformation stretches from 1517, when Luther nailed his Ninety-Five Theses to the doors of Wittenberg Cathedral, to roughly the end of the Thirty Years' War (1648). The theological thrust of the Reformation was the restoration of the Gospel. In Luther's view, the Gospel had been so misrepresented by the Roman Catholic Church that a radical reformation of church practices and teachings was necessary. Two of the injustices associated with the sale of indulgences were the diversion of economic resources to Rome for illegitimate purposes and the offer of forgiveness without repentance. Theses 43–46 read:

> Christians are to be taught that he who gives to the poor or lends to the needy does better work than buying pardons;
> Because love grows by works of love, and man becomes better; but by pardons man does not grow better, only more free from penalty.

[11] Alleman, "Christianity."

> Christians are to be taught that he who sees a man in need, and passes him by, and gives [his money] for pardons, purchases not the indulgences of the pope, but the indignation of God.
> Christians are to be taught that unless they have more than they need, they are bound to keep back what is necessary for their own families, and by no means squander it on pardons.[12]

Calvin, too, saw mercy ministry as a central role of the Christian. In his *Institutes*, Book 2, Chapter 8, Calvin explains that doing good to neighbors is an essential part of true piety:

> Because a man does not easily maintain love in all respects unless he earnestly hears God, here is proof also of his piety. Besides, since the Lord well knows, and also attests through his prophets, that no benefit can come from us to him, he does not confine our duties to himself, but he exercises us "in good works toward our neighbor."
>
> The Apostle therefore has good reason to place the whole perfection of the saints in love. Elsewhere, he quite rightly calls it the "fulfillment of the law," adding that "he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law."[13]

Throughout the Middle Ages, Benedictine monasteries provided free places of rest where each guest was to be "received as though they were Christ." The Order of the Holy Ghost in the twelfth century operated more than 800 orphanages, along with many other monasteries.[14]

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, early evangelicalism developed a nonconformist aspect of activism, which refers to the belief that the internal change brought about by gospel conversion would be worked out in the external application of

---

[12] Andrew J. Spencer, in blog, *A Brief History of Mercy Ministry in the Church, Part 3* (Wake Forest, NC: Ethics & Culture, 2015), 1. http://www.ethicsandculture.com/blog/a-brief-history-of-mercy-ministry-in-the-church-part-three.

[13] Jean Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book 2, chap. 8 (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press), 134.

[14] Alleman, "Christianity."

the Gospel to life. It was this tendency toward activism that led William Carey to build businesses to improve the local economy in India, to end injustices like the burning of widows, and to start schools instead of *only* preaching the Gospel. It also drove people like William Wilberforce and John Newton to fight for the abolition of slavery.[15]

The nineteenth century witnessed the development of the cornerstones of modern charity. The most famous of these was probably the Salvation Army, founded in 1865 by the Christian philanthropist and ordained minister William Booth. Originally, the Salvation Army's mission was to provide medical care in impoverished areas and to provide shelter for women who had engaged in prostitution. Booth eventually founded homeless shelters, a bank for the poor, vocational schools, and employment agencies. By 1899, the Salvation Army had given homes to 11 million people, distributed 27 million meals, provided jobs to 9,000 people, and even helped locate thousands of people through a missing persons bureau.[16]

Then there is Goodwill Industries, founded in 1902 by the Reverend Edgar J. Helms of the Morgan Methodist Chapel in Boston. With more than 3,300 Goodwill stores across North America, the name has become synonymous with giving. In addition, the YMCA, founded by George Williams, began as the Drapers Evangelical Union and was renamed the Young Men’s Christian Association in 1844. The Children’s Aid Society was founded in 1853 by Charles Loring Brace, who was a clergyman of the Congregational Church. Children's Aid is one of America's oldest and largest nonprofit charities for children.

---

[15] Spencer, “Brief History of Mercy Ministry.”

[16] Alleman, “Christianity.”

The Charity Organization Society, which was founded in 1869 by Frances Wisebart Jacobs, Myron W. Reed, Msgr. William J. O'Ryan, Dean H. Martyn Hart, and Rabbi William S. Friedman, fundraises and coordinate services between twenty-two different agencies. This would eventually become known as the well-established United Way. United Way is the largest nonprofit organization in the United States with public donations before 2016. Even in the realm of animal care, Christians sparked massive progress through the founding of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) in 1824, the first organization of its kind.[17]

The RSPCA was founded through the efforts of Christian abolitionist William Wilberforce and other reformers such as Fowell Buxton, Rev. George Bonner, and Rev. George Avery Hatch. It was the first animal welfare organization founded in the world and is the largest to this day. The renowned International Red Cross was founded in 1863 by Jean Henri Dunant. Dunant received the first Nobel Peace Prize in 1901 and is quoted as saying, "I am a disciple of Christ as in the first century, and nothing more." He chose the Christian cross as the organization's emblem. In 1876, Turkey adopted the idea of the Red Cross but changed its emblem to a Muslim crescent moon. Finally, Compassion International was started by evangelist Everett Swanson in 1952 while he was helping Korean orphans.[18]

In the words of Colonel Fielding Hudson Garrison, MD, an acclaimed medical historian, bibliographer, and librarian of medicine of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, "The spirit toward sickness and misfortune was not one of compassion,

[17] Alleman, "Christianity."

[18] Alleman, "Christianity."

and the credit of ministering to human suffering on an extended scale belongs to Christianity."

Compassionate action usually takes three forms: charity, service, and justice. Although some would include service under the first category, charity, more specifically, involves gifts of money, clothing, food, or other material goods—it does not necessarily involve an investment or our talent. Charity is important, but writing a check to a worthy cause does not fundamentally change a person. Although charitable giving demonstrates a generous nature, it maintains distance from those in need. Service, however, involves direct, face-to-face contact with those in need. It can be an immensely transformative experience, changing individuals from a natural state of self-centeredness into increasingly selfless people. Perhaps it is the only thing that will. Although generosity sometimes leads to self-satisfaction, service often becomes a very humbling experience.[19]

Charity and service are both personal forms of compassionate action. Their objective is to alleviate the effects of suffering in the world. Justice, on the other hand, seeks to eliminate the root causes of suffering. Martin Luther King Jr. said:

> On the one hand we are called to play the good Samaritan on life's roadside; but that will be only an initial act. One day we must come to see that the whole Jericho road must be transformed so that men and women will not be constantly beaten and robbed as they make their journey on life's highway. True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it is not haphazard and superficial. It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring.[20]

---

[19] Kurt Struckmeyer, *A Conspiracy of Love: Following Jesus in a Postmodern World* (Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2016), 1. https://followingjesus.org/compassion-in-action-charity-service-and-justice/.

[20] Martin Luther King Jr., "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence," speech delivered at Riverside Church, New York, NY, April 4, 1967, *American Rhetoric*, https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkatimetobreaksilence.htm.

Compassion in Public Policy

With the onset of the Great Depression in 1929, the focus of charitable organizations quickly shifted from combating endemic poverty to providing immediate relief in the form of alms, shelter, and breadlines. At the same time, the New Deal of the 1930s saw a flurry of legislative action that led the federal government to take a much more active role in providing jobs, such as through the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), in overseeing direct relief to millions of unemployed Americans, and in ensuring an income for retirees through the new Social Security program.[21]

In today's culture, the practice of compassion has shaped public policy in many other tangible ways. In the United States, voices across the political and ideological spectrum have sounded the call for compassionate responses to alleviate human suffering. Examples include justice and mercy (especially in the criminal justice system), self-sufficiency (in welfare policy), and forgiveness (in discussions of f national or racial/ethnic reconciliation).[22]

Conservatives emphasize a diminished role for "big government" in responding to needy Americans through programs and prescribe a government role that supports civil society and religious actors in doing this frontline work. More liberal perspectives would suggest that compassionate action, like other manifestations of social assistance, has historically occurred within the family and community. As societies have become more

---

[21] Glen L. Thompson, *Christian Compassion Through the Centuries* (Mequon, WI: Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, 2022), 1.

[22] Spencer, "A Brief History of Mercy Ministry."

complex, however, the government has taken on responsibilities previously held by smaller units, such as the family and the community.

Compassion in public policy identifies specific, relevant domestic federal policies that address various types of suffering. Examples include the Medicare Hospice Benefit, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), and the Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act. The Medicare Hospice Benefit is palliative care to provide comfort; eligibility: terminally ill, certified by a doctor, patient decision to seek hospice care and end treatment of disease. The VAWA represents the coordination of multiple systems: crisis care, shelter, legal assistance, emotional support, and emphasizes linguistic and culturally specific services.

The Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act is a coordination of multiple federal, state, and local systems: crisis care for individuals, provision of food, shelter, and counseling.[23] Although hospice care is well connected to known conceptions of compassion, the interest in providing it as a public policy benefit was also largely related to cost considerations. VAWA had different origins. This legislation was the culmination of many years of grassroots efforts to acknowledge the social problem of domestic violence and to provide assistance to its victims. Stafford legislation evolved from numerous, earlier, largely uncoordinated efforts to prepare for and respond to both natural disasters and other large-scale emergencies.[24]

---

[23] Mary E. Collins, Sarah Garlington, and Kate Cooney, "Relieving Human Suffering: Compassion in Social Policy," *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*, 42, no. 1 (2015): 108.

[24] Collins, Garlington, and Cooney, “Relieving Human Suffering,” 105.

Compassion in the Fight Against Human Trafficking

In the last two decades, the world has become increasingly aware of human trafficking and the atrocities victims suffer at the hands of their traffickers. Civil society, as well as governmental and nongovernmental agencies, have fought against this crime by updating laws such as The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), enacted in 2000, and creating subsequent laws at the state level. Within human trafficking, there are different types of exploitation.

The TVPA defines sex trafficking as the "recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act."[25] When this type of crime is committed against a minor, the absence of force, fraud, or coercion does not disregard trafficking as a crime, and it is considered a severe form of trafficking. Other severe forms of trafficking occur when a person is entrapped into "involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery."[26] In practice, victims of sex trafficking are subject to strategic deception, confinement, reidentification, and exposure to violence, danger, and drugs. These strategies are used by traffickers in order to manipulate and control their victims. As a result, trafficked victims, whether in the United States or abroad, do not have the freedom to simply leave their perpetrators.[27]

For most in the sex trade, their lives have been marked and marred by treatment that told them they were neither loved nor worthy of love. The abuse that sex trafficking

---

[25] U.S. Congress, *Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000*, Public Law 106-386 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2000), 1.

[26] U.S. Congress, *Victims of Trafficking*, 1.

[27] Polaris Project, *How Human Trafficking Happens*, https://polarisproject.org/how-human-traffickinghappens/.

victims endure is extreme, often repeated, and prolonged. It can include all types of abuse—physical, sexual, emotional/psychological, verbal, spiritual, and financial. Victims of sexual exploitation are more than twice as likely as war veterans to experience extreme PTSD. Often, the abuse begins in childhood, and its effects are compounded in adulthood.

The physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual wounds left by a life in the sex trade require a great deal of compassion, care, intentionality, and love to heal. The pathway to freedom, safety, and hope is a long one, filled with ups, downs, twists, and turns—but it is one worth taking. The journey often begins with a small spark of hope, and as survivors come to see themselves as worthy of love and deserving of a life free from abuse and exploitation, that hope grows, and with it comes healing and transformation.[28]

It is necessary to use Christ's compassion to love survivors. Love covers a multitude of sins. Loving them means showing them honor. It is showing them that they are worthy of respect. With this kind of relentless love, they can find their self-worth that has been stolen from them. It means standing with them and walking them through the healing process, as the Samaritan did with the beaten man on the road to Jericho. It also means restoring trust in a safe environment.

Compassion requires tenacity. Surviving sex trafficking and the sex trade requires tenacity, and healing from the effects of trafficking and the sex trade requires just as much tenacity, if not more. Tenacious love means refusing to give up hope and refusing

[28] Blog, *Real Escape from the Sex Trade*, (Seattle, WA 2022), 1. https://iwantrest.com/blog/five-ways-love-heals-exploitation.

to stop taking action to help survivors overcome barriers, navigate complex systems, and work through trauma-related challenges on their road to recovery. This practice of love validates that every single survivor, regardless of their story or circumstance, is worth going the extra mile for. And when they start to believe that for themselves, they begin to fight harder for a life outside of the sex trade—a life free from exploitation.[29]

While the nature and scope of trafficking varies from country to country, there are certain things that are common. One of the chief commonalities is that victims typically do not identify themselves. They are afraid of being considered dirty, criminals, or illegal aliens. Underlying sex trafficking and slave labor today is a twisted belief that some people are less than human. And this is where compassion plays a vital role. At the heart of all efforts to end human trafficking is a commitment to human dignity—a desire to not only rescue but restore. When we understand that compassion is, at its core, seeing the suffering of others and taking whatever action we can to stop it, we can play a vital role in bringing hope to the hopeless, helping the helpless, and healing the broken.

The late Tim Keller pointed out that the ministry of the Word is the church's priority, but local churches must equip believers "to love their neighbor, integrate their faith in their work, and seek a more just and wholesome society and culture." Reformed theologian Kevin DeYoung states, "It is not imperative that every church have an official 'mercy ministry' program. It is essential, however, that every congregation is involved in mercy ministry." In Scripture, acts of mercy often coincide with sharing the Gospel. Meeting a felt need can open the door to meeting a spiritual need. Put differently, when we lead with compassion, we earn the right to be heard.

---

[29] Real Escape from the Sex Trade, "Five Ways Love Heals."

Conclusion

This study of compassion began with an examination of its meaning and use in Scripture. I reviewed examples of them as presented by the Church from its earliest days to the present. I then explored how society as a whole has been affected by Christian compassion and its example in setting public policy. Finally, I have demonstrated how compassion is essential to the fight against human trafficking, which is the focus of my doctoral project:

> [S]ome can't hear our proclamation [of the Gospel] until they've been delivered physically from injustice and other forms of suffering. Until we pick them up from the road, they won't hear of the good news. Today, millions are being drugged, sold, and raped multiple times a day in sex trafficking. Do you think they will hear your proclamation? I don't.[30]

[30] Tony Merida, Ordinary: *How to Turn the World Upside Down* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publications, 2015), 12.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERDISCIPLINARY FOUNDATIONS

Victims of human trafficking are deprived of the most basic human right: the right to freedom. Trafficking victims are often forced into cruel and dehumanizing working conditions and are helpless to leave their exploitative situations or to seek help. It is a crime that affects people from all around the world, including in the United States. Law enforcement, particularly local law enforcement, is often in the best position to identify victims, who may be hidden within the communities they serve and difficult to uncover due to the subversive and underground nature of this crime. As a result, the federal government has prioritized the prosecution of human trafficking and expects local law enforcement to become the eyes and ears for recognizing, uncovering, and responding to circumstances that may appear to be a routine street crime but may ultimately turn out to be a case if human trafficking.[1]

What justice looks like for human trafficking victims has long been viewed largely through the lens of the criminal justice system. To be sure, the US Department of Justice, like other justice agencies, remains committed to prosecuting and punishing those who illicitly trade in human beings. However, research has opened a window to new

[1] Amy Farrell, Jack McDevitt, and Stephanie Fahy, *Understanding and Improving Law Enforcement Responses to Human Trafficking: Final Report* (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Institute on Race and Justice, 2008), 1.

insights on trafficking justice, including the finding that most trafficking survivors favor prevention and victim healing over incarceration of those who committed the crime.[2]

Trafficking in persons is a crime that denies an individual's civil rights and agency. Victims can be found in legal and illegal labor industries, including childcare, eldercare, the drug trade, personal care services, hospitality, food production and processing, and more. In some cases, victims are hidden behind doors in domestic servitude in a home. Others are in plain view, interacting with people on a daily basis, and are forced to work under extreme conditions in massage parlors, exotic dance clubs, cleaning businesses, or restaurants. These conditions exist throughout the United States.[3]

In recent years, sex trafficking has gained visibility in the United States through increased media coverage, political support, legislative accomplishments, expansion of social services for sex trafficking survivors, and the increased number of community anti-trafficking activist organizations. Sex trafficking is not a new phenomenon, but the process of redefining sex trafficking through key legislation has helped bring this problem to the attention of the public and politicians.[4]

When federal authorities investigate sex trafficking, three realities are always present. First, most sex trafficking investigations begin in response to an individual providing evidence to investigators. Second, the elements required to prove someone

---

[2] Jeanette Hussemann et al., *Bending Towards Justice: Perceptions of Justice Among Human Trafficking Survivors* (Washington, DC: Office of Justice Programs' National Criminal Justice Reference Service, 2018), 12.

[3] United States Office of Justice Programs. *An Ongoing Commitment to Victims of Human Trafficking* (Washington, DC: Office for Victims of Crime, 2021), 2.

[4] Alicia W. Peters, *Responding to Human Trafficking: Sex, Gender, and Culture in the Law*. (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 1.

guilty of sex trafficking under federal sex trafficking laws provide prosecutors with an incentive to rely on the victim's statements and cooperation throughout the course of the investigation. This can be, and often is, psychologically traumatic for the victim.

Third, most cases are viewed through a traditional tripartite structure involving the trafficker, the victim(s), and the purchasers of the sex act (johns). However, recent high-profile sex trafficking indictments demonstrate that trafficking schemes are frequently much more complex than this tripartite structure and involve many other individuals who either participated in or were involved in illicit conduct. As such, the way federal authorities investigate sex trafficking can, and should be, reimagined.[5]

Justice is focused on transforming the social structures and systems that produce poverty and suffering, and it is the *social* form of compassionate action. It is the *political* means of caring for the least of these. The difference between charity and service on the one hand and justice on the other is this: charity and service seek to heal wounds, while justice seeks to end the social structures that create wounded people in the first place. According to William Sloane Coffin (1924–2006), "The Bible is less concerned with alleviating the effects of injustice than in eliminating the causes of it." Still, all three of these are necessary components of what the German martyr and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906–1945) described as "righteous action" in the world. Together, righteous action and contemplative prayer would form the essence of a "religionless Christianity" in our day.[6]

---

[5] Evan Binder, "Getting Out of Traffic: Applying White Collar Investigative Tactics to Increase Detection of Sex Trafficking Cases," *Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology* 112, no. 3 (2022): 4.

[6] Cited in Kurt Struckmeyer, *A Conspiracy of Love: Following Jesus in a Postmodern World (Eugene*, OR: Resource Publications, 2016), 4, https://followingjesus.org/compassion-in-action-charity-service-and-justice.

As we begin the process of creating a task force to combat human trafficking, we will emphasize to those who participate that the purpose of sex trafficking detection and investigation is not primarily to maximize accountability. It is about rescuing victims from the clutches of their traffickers. This is the justice we seek. If vast criminal organizations can be halted because one participant is immunized, and all of those being trafficked can be saved, the trade-off is worthwhile.[7]

The Problem

In a study by the Urban Institute, researchers interviewed eighty survivors of labor and sex trafficking across the nation, as well as 100 social service and criminal justice stakeholders, in order to understand their perceptions of justice in human trafficking cases.[8] The research was centered on interviews with survivors of human trafficking and justice and social service system stakeholders. It offers perspectives on how trafficking survivors, as well as stakeholders, view justice, largely in terms of what would be most helpful to survivors and their recovery. The research project did not address the broader impact of human trafficking on society or the role and purpose of the criminal justice system.

A pivotal insight was that more than three-quarters of survivors interviewed did not view justice in terms of seeing their trafficker incarcerated. In fact, the research team found that domestic survivors of sex trafficking expressly criticized the value of

---

[7] Binder, "Getting Out of Traffic," 4.

[8] National Institute of Justice, *For Human Trafficking Survivors, Justice Is More About Healing and Preventing Future Trafficking* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice, 2021), https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/human-trafficking-survivors-justice-more-about-healing-and-preventing-future.

incarceration as a means of achieving accountability for traffickers' wrongdoing. Although survivors agreed on the importance of holding traffickers accountable, overall, labor and sex trafficking victims saw justice primarily in terms of preventing traffickers from harming others. However, the justice system stakeholders interviewed held fast to the view that traffickers must be held accountable through criminal prosecution.

Models of Justice

Researchers see potential in three alternative models of justice in the context of human trafficking. First, models of procedural justice maintain that the process by which justice is achieved is more important than the outcome of the case. Procedural justice refers to the idea of fairness in the processes that resolve disputes and allocate resources. The processes engage victims and allow them to tell their stories.

According to T. R. Tyler, there are four components of procedural justice: voice, neutrality, trustworthiness, and respect.[9] While other variables, such as training and experience, are critical to police-citizen interactions, these elements are the most critical to the effective implementation of procedurally just practices.[10] All four components are equally important. However, specific circumstances may dictate which component is more relevant than the others. For example, neutrality plays a central role in general perceptions of procedural justice perceptions, specifically among groups typically targeted by law enforcement. Examples of such groups might be Muslims targeted in

[9] T. R. Tyler, *Why People Obey the Law* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=2893920.

[10] Kirby Laura Rhodes, "Procedural Justice and Police Officers: The Forgotten Perspective" (master's thesis, University of Mississippi, 2018), 7, ProQuest Dissertations, Publication Number 470.

national security processes or minorities in crime control practices. Neutrality occurs when the recipient of a procedurally just act feels that the decision was made based on facts, not on the personal opinions or biases of the authority figure.[11]

When citizens feel that their situation was addressed neutrally, their respect for and trust in law enforcement grows. Respect is when the receiver of procedurally just acts feels that they have been treated appropriately and politely. A 2015 study by Nix, Wolfe, Rojek, and Kiminski found that even in areas where mistrust of law enforcement is prevalent, if the officer maintains a highly respectful demeanor, they will be able to build trust with the citizens.[12] Conversely, Nix et al. stated that acting in a disrespectful manner exacerbates the level of mistrust, which in turn decreases compliance. There is a very clear connection between respectful treatment on the part of the officer and trust by the community. According to Nix, trustworthiness is when the recipient of procedural justice acts justly and feels that the person engaging in procedural justice is only acting with the recipient's best interests in mind and genuinely cares.[13]

Voice is when the recipients of procedural justice feel that they have a say before the decision is made. In the case of citizen-police interactions, it is allowing citizens to ask questions about the situation. As it applies to human trafficking, an overarching element of procedural justice is the respectful treatment of survivors as they pursue services for themselves and/or criminal justice outcomes for their traffickers.[14]

---

[11] Rhodes, "Procedural Justice and Police Officers," 7.

[12] J. Nix and S. E. Wolfe, *Sensitivity to the Ferguson Effect: The Role of Managerial Organizational Justice* (British Columbia, CA: Journal of Criminal Justice, 2016), 1.

[13] Nix and Wolfe, *Sensitivity to the Ferguson Effect*, 1.

[14] Lilly Yu et al., *Alternative Forms of Justice for Human Trafficking Survivors* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute Justice Policy Center, 2018), 1,

Models of restorative justice maintain that justice outcomes may not always serve the interests of survivors, individuals who committed offenses, and communities. Restorative justice repairs the harm caused by crime, bringing together victims, offenders, and communities to decide how to do so.

Modern restorative justice grew out of experiments in the 1970s that brought people who had committed crimes together with the people they had hurt. Restorative justice provided a new focus on individuals and communities, asking what people needed to heal from incidents of wrongdoing.[15] The need to return to commonsense problem-solving in response to crime helped motivate the resurgence of restorative justice. As stated by Lorenn Walker, "Restorative justice was brought back not by politicians or policymakers, but by passionate practitioners working in the voluntary and community sector in the hope of bringing balance and justice where the traditional criminal justice system failed." Restorative justice considers crime more holistically than the mainstream criminal justice system does. It recognizes that crime can cause both physical and emotional harm to people and that crime affects different groups of people. Restorative justice addresses any kind of harm and what may be needed to repair it. It gives people opportunities to heal.[16]

---

https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/97341/alternative_forms_of_justice_for_human_trafficking_survivors.pdf.

[15] Lorenn Walker, "Restorative Justice: Definition and Purpose," in *Restorative Justice Today: Practical Applications*, ed. Lorenn Walker (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2013), 1, https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452244228.

[16] T. Gavrielides, *Restorative Justice Theory and Practice: Addressing the Discrepancy* (Helsinki, Finland: European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, 2007), 1.

People harmed by crime include those directly targeted and hurt by the crime (e.g., a family whose home is burglarized); the loved ones of those harmed (e.g., family members who do not live in the burglarized home who were negatively affected because their loved ones were burglarized); and the person who committed the crime, and their loved ones (e.g., the burglar and their loved ones). Restorative justice also provides those who caused the crime the opportunity to be accountable for their behavior, which can also be healing.[17]

One area of special concern has been the neglect of victims and their needs; legal justice is largely about what to do with offenders. It has also been driven by a desire to hold offenders truly accountable. Recognizing that punishment is often ineffective, restorative justice aims to help offenders recognize the harm they have caused and to encourage them to repair the harm to the extent possible. Rather than obsessing over whether offenders get what they deserve, restorative justice focuses on repairing the harm caused by crime and engaging individuals and community members in the process. It is basically common sense—the kind of lessons our parents and forebearers taught—and that has led some to call it a way of life. When a wrong has been done, it needs to be named and acknowledged. Those who have been harmed need to be able to grieve their losses, to be able to tell their stories, to have their questions answered—that is, to have the harms and needs caused by the offense addressed. They—and we—need to have those who have done wrong accept their responsibility and take steps to repair the harm to the extent possible[18]

---

[17] Gavrielides, *Restorative Justice Theory*, 1.

[18] H. Zehr, *Changing Lenses: A New Focus for Crime* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1990), 1.

Restorative justice models argue that criminal justice outcomes, including conviction and imprisonment, are not always the best response to crimes against a person. In the case of human trafficking, non-punitive, survivor-driven responses, including an acknowledgment of wrongdoing or an apology from traffickers, survivor confrontation with their traffickers, and the payment of reparations, can significantly impact perceptions of justice.[19]

Transitional justice is rooted in accountability and redress. It favors responses to crimes by the larger community that are more likely to promote peace, provide a sense of justice, and result in longer-term impacts. The transitional justice movement seeks to reduce the moral distance between what has been and what should be at the level of broad social and political institutions.[20]

Transitional justice for trafficking survivors focuses primarily on institutional and policy reform, as well as education and commemorative initiatives, such as trafficking awareness campaigns and conversations with policymakers about trafficking-related legislation.

Beyond stakeholder engagement, survivors should play a leading role in determining the direction, format, and commitment of alternative justice practice. Not all survivors want an apology from their trafficker, and not all survivors are willing to advocate for anti-trafficking measures in Congress. And since some of the most vivid and encouraging alternatives come from survivors themselves, it is important to give

---

[19] Daniela Bolivar, *For Whom Is Restorative Justice? A Mixed-Method Study on Victims and (Non-) Participation,* (Santiago, CL: Restorative Justice, 2013*).*

[20] Rosemary Nagy, *Transitional Justice: Nomos Li*, ed. Melissa S. Williams and Jon Elster, (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2012), 1. https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.dtl.idm.oclc.org/lib/dtl/detail.action?docID=865431.

survivors space to create their own pathways to healing, moving on, and making social and structural changes that can prevent future victimization.[21]

The story of the Good Samaritan is probably one of the most well-known biblical stories of all time. We can find its popularity even in the non-Christian world, so much so that many countries now have "Good Samaritan" laws, which provide legal protections for those who would help others.[22] As we examine the issue of human trafficking, we discover that this story embodies the same reality as that of a trafficked victim, the failed response of many in positions of authority with available resources, and the willingness to get involved by ordinary, everyday people who see the need, feel compassion and do what they can.

Dehumanization, or the active refusal to give value to other humans, drives all forms of exploitation. This is especially seen in commercial sex trafficking and labor trafficking. A person is "dehumanized" when the "personhood" of the individual is stripped away, and they are left as nothing but an objective commodity to be bought and sold. From the moment that we dehumanize our "neighbor," it is not a far leap to objectification and commodification."[23]

As a social norm, victim blaming is pervasive and can occur in overt and subtle ways. Survivors are often questioned or second-guessed about what they could (or should) have done differently to prevent trafficking. The more the public paints victims

---

[21] Yu et al., *Alternative Forms of Justice*, 1.

[22] Working Preacher, *Commentary on Luke 10:25–37*, (St. Paul, MN: Luther Seminary, 2022). https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/ordinary-15-3/commentary-on-luke-1025-37-5.

[23] Working Preacher, *Commentary on Luke 10:25–37*.

as catalysts of their own trafficking, the less responsibility is placed on the true perpetrator, the trafficker and/or the buyer. Victim blaming is also perpetuated by our cultural need for logical explanations for bad deeds and the assumption that things in life are fair. "If we start believing the world *isn't* fair, then it becomes more apparent that *anyone* can fall victim to any tragedy."[24]

One of the challenges of our day is that there are so many needs. It can be overwhelming to determine who we can help and who we cannot help. With the advent of caring NGOs, nonprofit relief organizations, and government programs, we assume that others will take care of the victims. However, the problem with this thinking is that it absolves us of any responsibility to personally help someone God puts in our paths.

The story of the Samaritan tells us that sympathy alone is not enough. It calls on the Church to intervene. By stopping by the injured victim and nursing and binding his wounds, the Samaritan can be said to have interrupted the "trajectory" of the injured victim, who would surely have died if he had not received help. Because of its complex nature, global human trafficking can only be thwarted through multilateral efforts. Churches should work with civil society groups and NGOs to meet the profound challenges posed by trafficking in repatriating victims, building shelters for returning victims, and even pressuring governments to develop laws and enforce legislation.[25]

The Church can be that welcoming community where victims of trafficking can find a home where they feel accepted and loved without being stigmatized. The Church

---

[24] Micheala Denny, "Victim Blaming: The Invisible Force Holding Back Sex Trafficked Individuals," *Voices for Florida*, 2023).

[25] Roland Chia, "God and the Victim," *Ethos Institute for Public Christianity*, 2015, https://ethosinstitute.sg/god-and-the-victim/.

can be that healing and nurturing community where people severely scarred can begin to rebuild their lives and explore promising directions for their futures. Most importantly, the Church can be the community of grace where victims of abuse can experience the saving embrace of Jesus Christ.[26]

Compassionate action usually takes three forms: charity, service, and justice. Although some would include service under the first category, charity specifically involves gifts of money, clothing, food, or other material goods—it does not necessarily involve an investment of our time and talents. Charity is important, but writing a check to a worthy cause does not really change us in a fundamental way. Although charitable giving demonstrates a generous nature, we often remain distant from those we seek to help. Service, however, brings us face-to-face with those in need. It can be an immensely transformative experience, changing us from our natural state of self-centeredness into increasingly selfless people. Perhaps it is the only thing that will. Although generosity sometimes leads to self-satisfaction, service often becomes a very humbling experience.[27]

Charity and service are both *personal* forms of compassionate action. Their objective is to alleviate the effects of suffering in the world. Justice, on the other hand, seeks to eliminate the root causes of suffering. Martin Luther King Jr. said:

> On the one hand we are called to play the good Samaritan on life's roadside, but that will be only an initial act. One day we must come to see that the whole Jericho road must be transformed so that men and women will not be constantly beaten and robbed as they make their journey on life's highway. True compassion

[26] Nix and Wolfe, "Sensitivity to the Ferguson Effect," 2.

[27] Struckmeyer, *Conspiracy of Love*, 7.

> is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it is not haphazard and superficial. It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring.[28]

In the last two decades, the world has become increasingly aware of human trafficking and the atrocities victims suffer under the oppression of their traffickers. Civil society, as well as governmental and nongovernmental agencies, have fought against this crime by updating laws such as the TVPA, enacted in 2000, and creating subsequent laws at the state level. Within human trafficking, there are different types of exploitation.[29] TVPA defines sex trafficking as the "recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act."[30] When this type of crime is committed against a minor, the absence of force, fraud, or coercion does not disregard trafficking as a crime, and it is considered a severe form of trafficking.

Other severe forms of trafficking occur when a person is entrapped into "involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery."[31] In practice, victims of sex trafficking are subject to strategic deception, confinement, reidentification, and exposure to violence, danger, and drugs. These strategies are used by traffickers in order to manipulate and control their victims. As a result, trafficked victims, whether in the United States or abroad, do not have the freedom to simply leave their perpetrators.[32]

---

[28] Martin Luther King Jr., "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence," speech delivered at Riverside Church, New York, NY, April 4, 1967, *American Rhetoric*, https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkatimetobreaksilence.htm.

[29] A. C. Richie-Zavaleta, A. M. Villanueva, L. M. Homicile, L. A. Urada, *Compassionate Care—Going the Extra Mile: Sex Trafficking Survivors' Recommendations for Healthcare Best Practices* (Basel, CH: Sexes 2021), 2.

[30] U.S. Congress, *Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000*, Public Law 106-386 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2000), 1.

[31] Nix and Wolfe, "Sensitivity to the Ferguson Effect," 2.

[32] Polaris Project, *How Human Trafficking Happens*, https://polarisproject.org/how-human-traffickinghappens/.

For most in the sex trade, their lives have been marked and marred by treatment that told them they were neither loved nor worthy of love. The abuse that sex trafficking victims endure is extreme, often repeated, and long-lasting and can include all types of abuse—physical, sexual, emotional/psychological, verbal, spiritual, and financial. Victims of sexual exploitation are more than twice as likely as war veterans to experience extreme PTSD. Often, the abuse begins in childhood, compounding its effects in adulthood.

The physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual wounds left by life in the sex trade require a great deal of compassion, care, intentionality, and love to heal. The pathway to freedom, safety, and hope is a long one, filled with ups, downs, twists, and turns—but it is one worth taking. The journey often begins with a small spark of hope, and as survivors come to see themselves as worthy of love and deserving of a life free from abuse and exploitation, that hope grows, and with it comes healing and transformation.[33]

Modern slavery differs from historical slavery in several ways: There are more slaves than ever before, but they are a smaller proportion of the human race. No nation defends slavery anymore, and slavery is illegal everywhere, so it requires corruption and crime to continue. The power of the slave owner is always subject to the power of the state. Slavery can only continue to exist if governments allow it, and some writers claim that government corruption is a leading cause of the persistence of slavery. Slaves are cheaper than ever and can generate high economic returns. Modern slavery is very cheap,

[33] Real Escape from the Sex Trade, "Five Ways Love Heals Exploitation," *REST Blog*, June 30, 2022, https://iwantrest.com/blog/five-ways-love-heals-exploitation.

and Kevin Bales has argued that this has made modern slavery even worse than that of the Atlantic slave trade.[34]

Just as there were courageous people in the nineteenth-century United States who "moved in silent, spontaneous revolt against a monstrous injustice" to combat slavery through the Underground Railroad, so today, there are many who have formed a similar resistance movement to the horrors of today's human trafficking.

Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery in which traffickers use force, fraud, and coercion to control victims for the purpose of engaging in commercial sex acts or labor services against their will. Sex trafficking has been found in a wide variety of venues within the sex industry, including residential brothels, escort services, fake massage businesses, strip clubs, and street prostitution. Labor trafficking has been found in diverse labor settings, including domestic work, small businesses, large farms, and factories.[35]

Human trafficking affects individuals across the world, including in the United States, and is commonly regarded as one of the most pressing human rights issues of our time. Human trafficking affects every community in the United States—across all ages, genders, ethnicities, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Sex trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purposes of a commercial sex act, where the commercial sex act is induced by force,

[35] Real Escape from the Sex Trade, "Five Ways Love Heals."

[35] National Human Trafficking Hotline, "Human Trafficking," accessed December 20, 2023, https://humantraffickinghotline.org/en/type-trafficking/human-trafficking.

fraud, or coercion, or where the person induced to perform such an act is under eighteen years of age.[36]

Labor trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purposes of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.[37]

Human trafficking is a market-driven criminal industry that is based on the principles of supply and demand, like drugs or arms trafficking. Many factors make children and adults vulnerable to human trafficking. However, human trafficking does not exist solely because many people are vulnerable to exploitation. Instead, human trafficking is fueled by a demand for cheap labor, services, and commercial sex.

Human traffickers victimize others in order to profit from the existing demand. In order to ultimately solve the problem of human trafficking, it is essential to address these demand-driven factors, as well as to change the overall market incentives of high profit and low risk that traffickers currently exploit. Left unchecked, human trafficking will continue to flourish in environments where traffickers can reap substantial monetary gains with a relatively low risk of getting caught or losing profits.

Conclusion

An examination of the issue of justice in relation to human trafficking reveals that multiple forms of justice are required, just as multifaceted efforts are necessary to end exploitation. These efforts must be implemented through cross-sectors collaborations

[36] National Human Trafficking Hotline, "Human Trafficking."

[37] National Human Trafficking Hotline, "Human Trafficking."

among various agencies. The failure to integrate diverse approaches to justice reflects a failure of imagination and a lack of impassioned and collaborative strategies.

This chapter has explored various models of justice that address not only victims but also their families, society, and even perpetrators. There can be no "one size fits all" approach to justice, and the most successful and proven methods of justice are those that adapt to specific contexts.

There are three alternative models of justice in the context of human trafficking: procedural justice, restorative justice, and transitional justice. Each model's strengths and weaknesses have been analyzed, demonstrating that while violators must be held accountable, research shows that healing for the individual, preventing traffickers from harming and exploiting others, and bringing restoration to the community serves an even greater good than simply incarcerating the trafficker. It is this greater good that the models above attempt to address.

This chapter has also explored how the biblical foundation of being a "Good Samaritan" to victims of human trafficking has led to larger forms of justice in the passing of "Good Samaritan" laws that provide legal protection for those who intervene. This concept reinforces the necessity of action on both personal and societal levels.

Furthermore, the theological concept of compassion has been presented, emphasizing the importance of seeing victims through the eyes of love and serving survivors as a calling and not simply a caseload. This perspective enables exploited people to be seen and to restore their humanity, even when the process is long.

Finally, comparisons have been drawn between the justice movement against modern-day slavery with that of historical slavery in the United States. Just as courageous

and compassionate people made a difference through the Underground Railroad, today's fight requires creative collaboration to combat the atrocities committed by this evil. Implementing the proper methods of justice for all involved provides the best opportunity to bring hope, healing, and restoration to the world.

.

CHAPTER SIX

PROJECT ANALYSIS

When I began the planning and preparation for this project, it was my intention to use both members and leaders from my ministry context to participate in the focus group sessions. However, by the time I was ready to begin the ministry project, the post-COVID numbers in my church plant, New Life Church, had dwindled down to just a few active members. It would be a challenge to get enough people to participate. In addition, some of our current leaders were unable to participate due to other demands on their time. As a result, I was faced with a dilemma. How was I going to find enough people from my context to create and sustain a focus group?

I decided that I needed to involve people who were not part of my ministry context. I brought in former members who were no longer active in the church but were still willing to help me with my project. I also used family members even though they were members of other churches. I also used some people from my home church, Cathedral International, who were supportive and willing to help me. Since we would be conducting our focus group sessions through Webex and using other online platforms such as Survey Monkey and Docusign for data needs, they would be able to participate remotely. Technology would prove to be a great help, as some of them did not live in the area and even out of state.

However, one challenge still remained. If the participants decided after completing the focus group sessions that they wanted to get involved in community anti-trafficking efforts, how could they do so from their locations? They were not near Edison, nor were they members of our church. I decided that what I needed to do was extrapolate that if the results showed that they wanted to participate in combating trafficking, then perhaps that would be evidence that people from other churches and organizations in my town if they were educated about trafficking, would also want to get involved. I would not have to rely on my participants to take the next step in the fight, but I would take the training and insight from the project and invest it in a new group of community members in the Edison area. This may be difficult since I have a limited prior relationship with these "outsiders," but if I could properly promote the cause itself, God could touch hearts and bring people together to create this new ministry.

I approached twelve people to join the focus group. All of them expressed an initial interest, but in a short time, the demands of their schedules prevented them from continuing. By the final week of the project, we had a core of six to eight consistent participants. These faithful few completed the sessions as well as the pre- and post-surveys and weekly journals.

There was another challenge I faced. Although I had done significant research on human trafficking, I did not feel qualified to lead the focus group with the kind of wisdom, insight, and experience that only survivors or those who work with them could provide. Therefore, I decided that I needed to include practitioners and survivors in our sessions if we were going to make this project not only educational but inspirational. As a result, I decided that while I would lead some of the sessions, I would also need to

connect with those I had met over the years who were actively involved in anti-trafficking organizations to join us.

Fortunately, our focus group sessions were all online, so they could participate from wherever they were at no cost other than about an hour of their time. I would soon find out that these individuals were more than willing to participate, especially in the opportunity to inspire people to get involved. These were people who struggled on a daily basis, and I have come to find out that individuals who have committed their lives to this cause are often eager to inspire others to become laborers in the field.

In preparing this project to obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, I discovered that due to the difficult and delicate nature of the subject matter, it would be necessary to have a mental health professional on hand for the focus group sessions to assist the participants if the conversations became difficult and if raw emotions began to surface. I am thankful that one of my professional associates, Dr. Deniece Reid, LCSW, Director of the Cathedral Community Counseling Center in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, was willing to attend our focus group sessions. As a licensed therapist, she provided a calming presence and helped facilitate a safe and healthy space for our conversations.

Methodology

The project took a primarily qualitative approach to data collection. The information collected was more descriptive in nature, as opposed to a quantitative method, which provides information that can be counted or measured. These data were more often open-ended, allowing participants to express their understanding and feelings about the topic. I believe this type of approach was more conducive to the objectives. I

wanted each participant in the study to first express, in their own words, what they understood human trafficking to be in the pre-surveys. Then, as we delved into the topic, they were asked to process their thoughts through the weekly journal entries. They were asked to write down what they took away from the focus group sessions. Finally, the post-surveys would provide them the means to express what they learned from the experience. These perspectives, In my opinion, required a qualitative study to capture the inner thoughts and ideas that would then lead to the kind of self-examination necessary for each participant to decide whether this was a cause they believed in strongly enough to commit to after completing this project.

Specifically, the pre-surveys asked open-ended questions that required some thought. For example, we asked participants, “How much do you know about human trafficking?” I could have offered a multiple-choice answer option, such as “a lot,” “a little,” or “nothing.” Instead, I left it up to each individual to say as much or as little as they wanted in response to this question. This qualitative method not only provided answers to the question but also provided insight into how each participant thought about the issue or, conversely, how little they thought about it. Additionally, in the pre-survey, we asked the question, “What do you think can be done to prevent human trafficking?” Rather than giving several options to choose from, I left this question open-ended as well, allowing them to show where they were on the spectrum of knowledge about the topic when they went into the sessions.

For the journal assignments, I asked them to address a different topic for each week based on the subject matter covered in the focus group session. For example, one week, we discussed my Biblical Foundations paper, which was written on the topic of the

Good Samaritan. In the subsequent journal assignment, I asked the group members to answer the following question(s): “Do you believe the story of the Good Samaritan and the beaten man on Jericho road applies to the subject of human trafficking? If so, how? If not, why not?” Answering these questions required them to reflect on the real-life victimhood of people who are being abused by their traffickers as well as their johns on a daily basis.

It made them consider how trafficking victims feel when they are literally beaten, like the man in the biblical story and left half dead. It also created an opportunity to realize that, like the priest and the Levite in the story, many people see these trafficking victims and do nothing about it, choosing not to get involved, in essence, “passing on the other side,” as the story in Scripture is told. Without coercing the participants by telling them to do something, it allows them to see for themselves that, like the Good Samaritan, they should find a way to help victims. This is the kind of reflection that can lead members to get involved after the project is completed.

In one of our focus group sessions, we invited a guest presenter to discuss her creative ministry. She uses music and drama to raise awareness about human trafficking by performing skits that demonstrate the real-life methods used by traffickers to lure their victims and how to avoid becoming a victim. One of the members of our focus group was an actress but had not been using her acting gift. The presentation inspired this participant to contact the presenter after the session and volunteer her services as a member of the drama team for future performances. This is an example of using whatever means one has at their disposal to make a difference.

At the end of the eight-week project, each participant completed a post-survey. These surveys were also primarily qualitative, leaving the questions open-ended enough for each member to compare their knowledge at the beginning with their knowledge at the end. For example, the post-survey asked, “What have you learned about human trafficking that you didn’t know before?” This question was asked specifically to compare their prior familiarity with the topic with their current familiarity. The survey also asked, “What can your city do to combat human trafficking?” followed by the question, “Would you be willing to work with an anti-trafficking group?” The questions were designed not only to test respondents' knowledge but also to determine their interest in getting involved. It has been my observation that most people choose not to participate in activities that make them feel uncomfortable, and in many cases, this discomfort is due to ignorance. I wanted to find out if their knowledge of the issue, including what to do with that knowledge, would lead to a willingness to engage in anti-trafficking work in partnership with others in the community.

Our guest speakers offered a valuable perspective on human trafficking based on their personal experiences and expertise. After their presentations, members of our focus group were able to ask questions and interact with the presenter and each other. The topics presented were a rich experience, and judging by the subsequent discussions and journal entries, the presentations were enriching and inspiring. In some cases, members expressed their commitment to pray for the presenters for their physical, emotional, and spiritual strength due to the hardships that many of their anti-trafficking work. Some of the harrowing real-life stories of survival and hardship were unforgettable and reminded the group that there are true heroes in the fight. There were also stories of loss, addiction,

and tragedy that reminded us that not every story has a happy ending. But it is always worthwhile to keep working and praying for those who are reached.

Implementation

Before the focus group sessions began, I asked each participant to review and sign the informed consent form as required by the IRB. The document was sent to each person via DocuSign, and each member initialed and signed the form as required. We also sent out the pre-survey form via Survey Monkey. Each participant completed the survey before the focus group sessions began. I was grateful for each participant's commitment and discipline in being able and willing to use the technology to ensure compliance. We had a few technical glitches here and there, but we eventually accomplished the task.

Session One

We had some initial technical difficulties with the Webex platform that took some time to work out, but eventually, everyone was able to be present. During this session, we introduced the topic of human trafficking, beginning with an introduction that included housekeeping items and prayer. We had a guest speaker, Susan Patterson. She is the director of Through God's Grace Ministry, an acclaimed author, and has spoken to over 100,000 people about human trafficking. Patterson hosts over a dozen events each year to equip the community to fight human trafficking. She provided our group with an overview of human trafficking, including definitions, types, and demographics of victims and buyers, as well as the role of technology in perpetuating crime.

The group explored the potential role of the Church in prevention and recovery, emphasizing the need for a trauma-informed approach, and discussed the legal challenges of prosecuting cases of human trafficking. Participants shared insights on recognizing and reporting cases of human trafficking, emphasizing community awareness and the role of law enforcement. The meeting concluded with a discussion on the need for mental health care for survivors and self-care for advocates, followed by reminders to complete surveys and consent forms and a closing prayer by Pastor Reid. Action items were assigned, including sending out consent and release forms and completing evaluations of the session.

The group was presented with a definition of human trafficking. According to the United States and the United Nations, a victim of human trafficking must be under the age of eighteen or working due to fraud, force, or coercion. We discussed that human trafficking is recognized as a form of enslavement, which is the control and exploitation of one person by another or by a group. For example, a prostitute who willingly entered that life at the age of eighteen or older would not be considered a victim of human trafficking. The most common forms of human trafficking are sex trafficking and labor trafficking. Victims often come from poor, minority communities, but trafficking can occur in any community at any time. It occurs at all levels of society, not just locally but also between countries. The group learned that trafficking crimes are sometimes integrated with human smuggling and sexual exploitation, but trafficking crimes are legally distinct from both.

As for buyers, we discussed that 6.2% of men of all races are repeat buyers and account for 75% of total purchases. Traffickers include not only individual entrepreneurs

but also gangs and cartels. Technology plays a major role in human trafficking and can include escort sites, chat rooms, and "john boards." We discussed that churches can play an important role in victim support, prevention, and recovery. Churches provide a safe environment, foster an atmosphere of trust, and allow the victim to begin the healing process.

We learned that there are legal challenges to prosecuting human trafficking cases. All too often, law enforcement treats victims as criminals, which can lead to victim blaming and undermine trust in the police. It also results in a criminal record, which can prevent them from finding employment or receiving assistance from the government. We also talked about the impact of legalizing prostitution on human trafficking. Experience has shown that the legalization of prostitution has led to an increased demand for sexual services, which has resulted in an expansion of the overall market for sex workers and an increase in the number of victims of human trafficking.

Patterson pointed out the importance of recognizing potential cases of human trafficking, such as massage parlors. There have already been successful local ordinances to combat illegal massage parlors. The key is community awareness and involvement. Finally, the need for mental health services for trafficking survivors and their families was mentioned, as well as the need for self-care for those dealing with trafficking issues. She specifically mentioned that she spends many hours each day in prayer so as not to be overwhelmed by the darkness that surrounds both victims and perpetrators as she works with both.

Session Two

In this focus group session, I presented the biblical parable of the Good Samaritan. The story was read from Luke 10:25-37. I specifically mentioned that this story embodies the same reality as a victim of human trafficking, the failed response of many responsible people with the resources available, and the willingness to get involved by ordinary, everyday people who see the need, feel compassion, and do what they can.

I asked the group for their thoughts on how the story related to victims of human trafficking. The question led to a conversation about the moral responsibility to help victims of human trafficking. We discussed the importance of loving and helping people in need in general and victims of human trafficking in particular. The group explored the barriers to helping, such as fear and misconceptions. Some believe that people do not get involved because of fear or worry about being deceived. Others said people just did not want to be inconvenienced. We asked if they ever felt that victims "deserved it." None of the participants were willing to express such a feeling.

I asked the group how we, as individuals, can help trafficking victims. Ideas were presented, such as food, prayers, and money. While admitting that they might be afraid of being taken advantage of, the group members emphasized the importance of trusting God when helping others.

We watched two YouTube video testimonies of survivors. The first survivor's story highlighted systemic failures, such as the foster care system, to protect vulnerable children. This failure is what ultimately led her down the wrong path. Her testimony discussed the importance of a stable home and a loving environment. In the second YouTube survivor story, the woman featured discussed the common misconceptions

about sex trafficking. She also mentioned the role of social media in trafficking from her own experience. She then talked about the importance of using past trauma to help others. The focus group session concluded with reflections on overcoming trauma and prayer. We discussed action items for future discussions on recognizing trafficking in local communities.

Session Three

In this session, I began with a discussion of the historic Underground Railroad in the nineteenth-century United States and how it can be applied to rescuing those trapped in the modern-day slavery of human trafficking. I discussed how sex trafficking and labor trafficking can be found in a wide variety of venues, such as residential brothels, escort services, fake massage businesses, strip clubs, domestic work, small businesses, large farms, and factories. I mentioned that just as slavery was fought through the Underground Railroad, there are many today who have formed a similar resistance movement against the horrors of human trafficking.

I then introduced Jean Stockdale, the director of Stillwaters, an anti-trafficking organization. Jean explained how her church-based NGO helps victims. She talked about the challenges of breaking victims out of trafficking situations. She also spoke about parallels between domestic violence and victims of sex trafficking. She gave an insightful presentation on the complexities of human trafficking, the TVPA, and the support systems that are essential to victims' recovery. She described her experiences with over 800 victims of human trafficking and emphasized the importance of housing and long-term support, drawing parallels with victims of domestic violence. This led to a group

discussion that covered the cyclical nature of trafficking and recovery, as victims often return to their traffickers. We talked about referral sources for victims, such as hospitals, shelters, law enforcement, and social workers. Jean emphasized the importance of understanding the victim's mindset and building trust.

Session Four

This session included a presentation by Wincey Terry-Bryant, the founder of Traffick Jam, a ministry using music and the arts to raise awareness about trafficking and to assist in prevention. She is an international recording artist who has worked with music industry legends such as Sting, Tina Turner, Dorothy Norwood, Tom Jones, and Grover Washington Jr. Her television credits include *Soul Train*, *The Arsenio Hall Show*, *Spike & Company Do It Acapella*, B.E.T.'s *Dr. Bobby Jones Birthday Celebration*, *The Cosby Show*, and *Late Night with David Letterman*. She has sung in TV commercials and appeared in the well-known children's series *Sesame Street*.

She shared her background in entertainment and anti-trafficking efforts, defining human trafficking through its core components of force, fraud, and coercion. We discussed traffickers' manipulation tactics, particularly targeting individuals with low self-esteem, and explored the online methods of trafficking, including the use of video games to lure children. Wincey presented a video of her actors performing a skit in which two traffickers illustrated how quickly predators can target children online through the use of video games and highlighted the significant dangers of social media. She shared stories of victims of human trafficking she has encountered in schools. The meeting concluded with Wincey inviting the participants to join her prayer team for the children.

Session Five

The discussion focused on linking community efforts to combat human trafficking with personal experiences and project updates. The session began with a round of introductions in which participants shared their own backgrounds and personal updates to create a collaborative tone. I detailed my vision for forming a new task force in Edison, emphasizing partnerships with existing organizations to enhance awareness. We watched a video highlighting the warning signs of trafficking and discussed the importance of educating children about its prevalence. Participants shared their motivations for engagement in the cause and explored the need for compassion and involvement in combating trafficking. The discussion included tactics used by traffickers, the role of social media, and the societal implications of financial motives in trafficking cases. Additionally, we addressed protective measures for children, advocating a balance between safety and privacy in the digital age, and concluded with a prayer for the protection of vulnerable individuals.

Session Six

This session featured guest speaker Armand King from California. He has a wealth of experience from over twenty years of living a life entangled in the criminal street element, including direct involvement with gangs as a former trafficker, the criminal justice system, including incarceration, and the challenges of re-entry. He shared his own transformative journey, from being involved in gangs and trafficking to becoming a dedicated anti-trafficking advocate. He described the evolution of trafficking practices and emphasized how media and technology have influenced the dynamics of

trafficking today, including the rise of independent operators and the "boyfriend-girlfriend" pimping model. He emphasized the urgent need to address the root causes of trafficking, such as poverty, and the importance of providing adequate resources along with early prevention strategies and trauma-informed care to support affected communities. At the end of the session, participants prayed for Armand, with an emphasis on self-care, as it was clear he was speaking from a broken heart over the struggles on the front lines and seeing so much death and destruction of lives.

Session Seven

In this session, I discussed the importance of learning from survivors and introduced guest speaker Gina Cavallo, a survivor and now-recognized advocate. She is the founder and executive director of the survivor-led organization Paying it Forward Foundation, also known as We RISE USA. She currently serves as a consultant and vice president of the Board of Trustees for the New Jersey Coalition Against Human Trafficking (NJCAHT). Cavallo is also an appointed member of the New Jersey Commission on Human Trafficking and has received numerous commendations for her work.

She provided a comprehensive overview, emphasizing the distinction between victims and survivors. She mentioned that it is possible to go from being a survivor to being a thriver, and this is part of her mission with those who have come out of the life. Cavallo detailed the grooming tactics used by traffickers, highlighting that trafficking can affect anyone—regardless of age or background. She shared her personal journey from victimization to survival, with a transparent discussion of her childhood abuse, domestic

violence, and, later, the challenges she faced during recovery, including stigma and the importance of support systems. The meeting concluded with the group expressing its gratitude for her contributions, and we prayed together for her.

Session Eight

This was our final session. I addressed critical aspects of human trafficking in the context of my doctoral research and thanked the group participants for their engagement in the previous sessions. We summarized the previous sessions and discussed all the topics covered. These topics included definitions of trafficking, stories of survivors, and the influence of gang culture. I asked the group members which discussions were the most memorable. The video of the skit by Winsey Terry-Bryant's drama team that explored the psychology of traffickers was mentioned. The ages of the victims, ranging from two to seventy-six, were also mentioned as impactful. We also discussed the need for ongoing education and awareness within community organizations. I shared with the group a national anti-trafficking hotline for reporting suspicious activity, and I recommended two books by Susan Patterson on how individuals and churches can get involved.

Summary of Learning

The goal of this project was threefold. First, I wanted to determine what each participant already knew about the subject of human trafficking, specifically sex and labor trafficking, and in fact whether they had any more than a passing interest in the subject. I use the term "passing" facetiously in reference to how the priest and the Levite

in the story of the Good Samaritan saw the beaten man in need on the Jericho road and "passed" on the other side. I wanted to know if anyone in the group would reveal themselves as having no interest in human trafficking or at least not enough to get involved.

Second, I wanted to educate each member to the point that everyone had a working knowledge of the subject and that those who already had the knowledge could take their learning not only to a new level of education but also to inspiration. I believe it is the kind of subject in which you cannot unsee what you have seen or unlearn what you have learned. It is repulsive and evil enough to make most people not only take a look at the issue but also take a look at themselves. We need inspiration in our hearts to get involved. Without such inspiration, pleading and urging are pointless. However, with an inspired heart and a clear mission, it was my expectation that our members would be willing to do something constructive, even if it is considered small, as the first task with the best chance of success.

This led me to my third goal. As mentioned earlier, I wanted to find out if the participants, through their reflection and introspection, would be willing to engage in the fight against human trafficking. While I realize that everyone is different and each of us has a different tolerance for what is morally repugnant, I wanted to see how many, if any, would express a desire to do something to help victims of human trafficking by the end of the project. I tried to approach the project without preconceived expectations. There were moments when I thought that anyone who recognized the need, especially someone who called themselves a Christian, was bound by their conscience to go to the next level. However, I did not want to assume that all or everyone would automatically do so.

From the pre-survey results, I discovered that virtually all of the participants (subjects) already had a considerable working knowledge of trafficking. The survey revealed that when asked how much they knew about human trafficking, 75% said they were "somewhat familiar" with it. Of the remaining subjects, 12.5% described themselves as "very familiar" with it, and the other 12.5% indicated they were "not familiar" with it. However, all respondents had a basic working knowledge of the subject. For example, when asked about the main reasons people become victims of human trafficking, none of them indicated that they did not know. Every answer given was a legitimate and recognized cause of victimization.

When the subjects were asked why victims do not try to escape, again, no one said they did not know. All answered the question, and their answers were thoughtful and knowledgeable. The answers were consistent with those we spoke to during our sessions who were experts, survivors, or both. It should be noted that I specifically asked participants not to do research on the questions but to answer the questions based on their own current knowledge of the topic or lack of knowledge. When asked what could be done to prevent human trafficking, again, none of them said they did not know. All gave answers, and the answers were well founded. Most of the answers recommended the need for education, not only for the public in general but also for the government and law enforcement. Based on these responses, I knew that my subjects had a reasonable working knowledge of the subject. However, I wanted to move on to my next objective and determine if I could improve their knowledge through education and inspiration. I would try to achieve this with the help of our focus group sessions.

We held eight sessions. All sessions were conducted online. After each session, participants were asked to write a journal entry about what they had taken away from the meeting. Subjects were instructed to email the entries to me. Unfortunately, not all the participants provided journal notes. Others waited and sent the entries in bunches in one email, which, in my opinion, allowed time to pass and may have allowed some thoughts to slip away. As might be expected, some had more to say than others about what they captured from the session. However, each of them was able to follow the groundwork that was being laid as I presented my discussions on successive topics each week, assisted by our guest presenters. The plan was to advance the knowledge of trafficking each week to a new level, one that would not only build their knowledge base but also build their confidence, because knowledge is power. I wanted to see how much of the material was being absorbed. Based on the journal entries, the results were mixed. As stated above, some recorded more of their thoughts than others.

As stated previously, I was advised by the IRB approver of my project that I would need to have a mental health professional present at the sessions due to the potentially sensitive nature of the topics. The following issues were described as potential immediate or long-term risks:

1. There may be individuals who will immediately be psychologically triggered by memories of past experiences with human trafficking, even if these participants themselves were never trafficked.
2. There may be individuals who currently feel threatened or believe that they will be subject to adverse treatment because of their participation.

3. There may be individuals who have suffered marital, economic, legal, and mental health consequences as a result of human trafficking.
4. There may be individuals who suffer from physical ailments and disabilities that are exacerbated by the mental and emotional stress they experience as a result of recalling and wrestling with human trafficking.

However, no indication of triggering was given by any of the participants. No concerns were expressed about feeling threatened or being treated unfairly. Furthermore, it did not appear that any of our participants were compromised to the point that mental health services were required. As previously mentioned, such services were available to us through my professional associate, who was present at each of our sessions. However, her services were not required in that capacity.

Based on the data collected from the subjects, it appears that the topics that elicited the most responses in the journals, both in terms of the number of responses and the amount of material in the responses, were the first week with guest speaker Susan Patterson, the second week with my discussion of the Good Samaritan, and the fourth week with guest speaker Winsey Terry-Bryant. This is not to say that they were uninterested or unaffected by the other events, but these seemed to generate the most responses. All participants expressed how much they enjoyed each of the focus group sessions.

The session in week six with guest presenter Armand King was also met with great interest. He shared with the group that he had once been a member of a gang and, a few years later, at the age of twenty-six, became fascinated with pimping and prostitution. None of his eight friends had a father in the house and no positive male role

models. Pimping seemed to be financially lucrative. His perspective made a big impression on the group members because of his actual involvement as a trafficker who not only left the lifestyle but also became a change agent to fight trafficking.

What I found interesting was that one of the most engaging participants in the focus group sessions did not provide journal entries despite my requests. There were also a few people who participated at the beginning but were unable to continue with the group to the end. Of course, it is not always possible to tell whether someone has absorbed the material based solely on their written responses. However, I can only rely on what is in writing and cannot assume that all participants learned what was prevented. As it has been said, just because you say it does not mean they heard it, they understood it, or they will do it. Nevertheless, all of the participants appeared to be engaged in each of the sessions. There was no group member who did not contribute to the discussion, although there were times when I had to ask certain less vocal members to share their perspectives. Once they shared their thoughts, their contributions were helpful.

After the seventh session, I sent our participants the post-survey to complete before our final session. The responses proved to be very enlightening. For example, the survey asked, “What did you learn about trafficking that you didn’t know before?” The most common refrain was how organized and widespread human trafficking is. This shows that the material taught was retained because this was explained in our sessions. What also seemed to have an impact on our subjects was the age of the victims, many of whom are forced or coerced into this life as children. It was encouraging to see that, in response to another question, none of the participants blamed the victims, even though, as

a few of the respondents said, the victims may have made "bad choices." The responses were clear: no one deserves to be treated the way these victims are treated.

We asked the question in the survey, "Based on what you've learned, is it possible that you have seen a trafficking victim?" There were no "yes" responses. Instead, 16.67% said "no," and the remaining 83.33% replied, "not sure." This suggests that we may have failed to better identify the signs of a trafficking victim to the group. We followed up with the question, "If so, what have you noticed that leads you to suspect this?" This follow-up question was designed to determine whether they had any idea of what signs might identify a trafficking victim. Their answers indicated that they were unsure. One participant noticed a massage parlor with late operating hours. Another mentioned a coworker who seemed to bounce from one residence to another, with the last known residence being a motel. This coworker seemed nervous/hyperactive, at times dressed "scantily," and often asked to borrow money.

What was also interesting were the answers to the question, "If you have recently seen a victim, what should you do about it?" Responses ranged from praying, to calling the authorities, to approaching them with a smile and a friendly hello, to giving them resources. One respondent said that if they got into a vehicle, they should get the license plate number and then call 911. It would have been preferable if the subjects had responded as one person did to provide resources in a friendly, non-threatening way, with a smile and a warm greeting.

This possibility was addressed in the next question: "In what ways can you help someone who has just come out of trafficking?" The answers were more practical and supportive, such as pointing them in the right direction in terms of organizations and

facilities that can help them. All subjects made it clear in their responses that these victims needed their love and support, not their judgment. We also asked, “What can your city do to combat human trafficking?” The replies covered a range of solutions, such as changing laws for perpetrators, providing housing and counseling, providing education and employment, and supporting organizations that assist victims. This led to our final question: “Would you be willing to be a part of an anti- trafficking organization?” The choices were “yes,” “no,” or “maybe.” No respondents said they were unwilling. Of the two remaining options, 16.67% said “yes,” and 83.33% said “maybe.” This was encouraging, and it suggested to me that with the right on-ramp, providing a simple, non-threatening way to get involved that would not be time-consuming would make our participants willing to join the fight.

Conclusion

This project was conducted to take a group of people in my context and determine what they already knew about the subject of human trafficking. Once this baseline was established, my goal was to develop that knowledge and find out if, based on their new knowledge, they would be willing to work with an anti-trafficking effort in the community where our context is located. However, the project ran into several obstacles. First, by the time the project was implemented, there were so few members left in our church that I had to go outside of my context to assemble a sufficient number of people to participate.

Second, we had several people who started out with us in the group, but after the first or second session, they were no longer able to continue. The group began with about

nine people, but by the end of the project, we were down to seven. Finally, not all of the participants provided all of the requested data in the form of journal entries. We only had six people who consistently provided the requested information through journals and post-surveys. Despite these obstacles, I was still able to gather enough information to assess the members' knowledge at the outset through the pre-survey, track their ongoing education through the focus group sessions and journals, and determine what new information they learned about human trafficking that they did not know before. From there, we determined what percentage of them would be willing to get involved in anti-trafficking efforts.

I had considered asking them in the pre-survey if they would be willing to participate in efforts to combat human trafficking in the community. That way, I could compare the answers to this question in the pre-survey and the post-survey and see if the answers were different. This might have indicated that the knowledge they gained during our sessions had provided the impetus to tip the scales. However, I decided that such a forward approach at the outset might have been off-putting, like asking a girl to go steady when you first meet. I did not want to show my hand too early, and in retrospect, I still think that was the right decision.

The challenge, of course, is that most of my participants were, for the most part, not from my context. So, even if they decided to get involved in the fight against human trafficking, where would they do it? It would probably not be in Edison, where my church is located, since some of the participants were not from the area. They would not likely travel to our city to get involved, nor would I expect them to. In fact, one of the group members was from out of state.

Therefore, the ultimate goal of starting a group in the community to address the issue, such as a task force, would not be possible with the members of my group. It would take new people from outside of my context, but they are still local. I would have to determine whether the few group members who are from my context would be willing to participate in an anti-trafficking organization. It should be noted that my research did not uncover any such existing organizations in Edison. Therefore, there is an opportunity to initiate something that can save lives, which, to my knowledge, is not being done. And in a city of over 100,000 people, this would be a significant undertaking if we can get enough attention and traction.

This project, despite its challenges, has also shown me that the participants care about the terrible evils that occur not only in the lives of adults but also of children and that they are willing to get involved. Therefore, based on this project, I have begun to lay the groundwork for a ministry in the Edison area called Edison FAST (Fight Against Sex Trafficking). We will use some of the recommendations from our experts and survivors who participated in our project. We will also rely on them as needed for consulting purposes. There are enough anti-trafficking groups in the state of New Jersey to provide the support needed to get Edison FAST off the ground.

Our goal is still to form a task force of community members, business owners, church leaders, and law enforcement. I will see if our focus group members from our context will be willing to participate if asked to perform a specific task. As mentioned above, we can start with simple tasks that are not intimidating or time-consuming so they can get their feet wet and have some initial success. If this is successful, the goal of the

project has been achieved. While the project is complete, the real work of combating human trafficking is just beginning.

APPENDIX A

PRE-SURVEY RESULTS

Pre-Survey Results

Q1: What is human trafficking?

Subject 1 (S1): Using person or persons for the purpose of buying and selling for someone else's sexual pleasure. New form of slavery.

Subject 2 (S2): Modern-day slave trade

Subject 3 (S3): When individuals or organizations exploit others for profit by causing them to perform sexual acts against their will.

Subject 4 (S4): Illegal and inhumane handling of human beings for profit through sexual exploitation and forced labor

Subject 5 (S5): Criminal injustice against humans for primarily sexual reasons.

Subject 6 (S6): Sometimes the a family member will traffic another family member People not being aware of their surroundings People not paying attention.

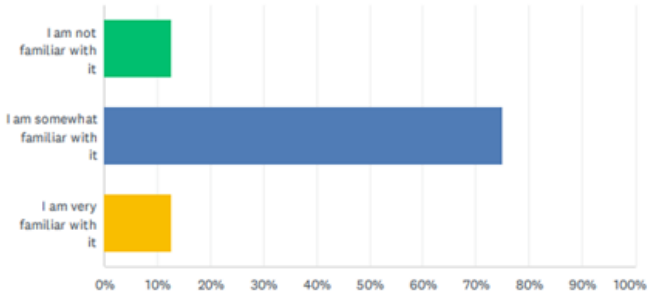
Subject 7 (S7): Similar to kidnapping and forcing someone to do things against their will.

Subject 8 (S8): Buying and selling human beings

Pre Survey for Focus Group Members SurveyMonkey

Q2 How much do you know about human trafficking?

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I am not familiar with it	12.50%	1
I am somewhat familiar with it	75.00%	6
I am very familiar with it	12.50%	1
TOTAL		8

Q3: What do you think are the main reasons people become victims of human trafficking?

S1: There's a demand for it. Not enough information about it. People may think that it really doesn't exist in today's society.

S2: Desperation and dreams of a better life based on lies told them

S3: Individuals may become victims due to homelessness and become drawn in by individuals that convinces them that they have somewhere safe to stay, individuals who are on drugs and alcohol And therefore, they surround themselves with environments that would lead them into sex trafficking

S4: They become detached from families, kidnapped

S5: Carelessness of ones surroundings; Low self-esteem; Sexual sin running rampant in all levels of authority; Lack of camaraderie with trusted family and friends, or privacy and an unwillingness to share truth. Shamefulness.

S6: Not being aware of their surrounding

S7: Financial or emotional challenges, low self-esteem

S8: Poverty and hope for a better life

Q4: Are there main countries of origin for trafficking victims? If so, what are they?

S1: I would think in the more impoverished areas.

S2: Don't know

S3: There are some countries that are more prevalent than others, but human trafficking has become very widespread put out the country in the world

S4: Unsure

S5: No

S6: Not certain

S7: I don't know.

S8: Victims from poorer countries sold to users from richer countries

Q5: How do you think traffickers control their victims?

S1: Coercion and fear.

S2: Fear

S3: By giving them food to eat, a place to stay, money, protection from threatening individuals

S4: Forced Drug addiction, false promises of payouts, rewards

S5: Lies of love and care.

S6: Restraining them being told not to say anything or they will harm family members

S7: Fear. Promising positivity, then threatening some level of harm if victim does not comply.

S8: Violence, mental abuse and financial control

Q6: Why do you think trafficking victims don't try to escape?

S1: They have been verbally and physically abused takien away from their homes. All their defenses are gone probably told no one wants you. I am the one who's taking care of you. Or possibility threaten that they will be killed or their families.

S2: They are far from home have no access or know anyone to go for help, families threatened

S3: They feel as though there is nowhere else to go or hide, the traffickers threaten to kill them

S4: Fear of themselves and/or their families are threatened being threatened with violence, shame to return to their origins (home)

S5: Victums are usually taken at a young age, and they may have been held captive too long and developed a bond with someone they feel cares for them. Family life unfavorable. Also too far from home, or homeless.

S6: Afraid Don't know how some do escape

S7: They may develop a false of security, belonging and protection in their current situation. Fear of consequences if they try to eacape.

S8: Fear for their lives or livelihood

Q7: What do you think are the main consequences of human trafficking?

S1: The victims the person that has been taken from their home or tricked into their deaths. Whether it be physical death, or emotional and mental death.

S2: That I am unsure about

S3: Suicide, depression, prostitution, mental illness, paranoia, numbness of the heart

S4: Suicide, mental disturbance, despondency

S5: Unhealthy fear of predators leads to fear of authority. Abuse and rejection confuse emotional status.

S6: Money

S7: Taking advantage of others, destroying victim's future

S8: Continuing cycles of poverty and despair while enriching criminal enterprise

Q8: What do you think can be done to prevent human trafficking?

S1: Educating people about human trafficking, laws being changed Parents being more aware of what's going on in the lives of their children

S2: Education of general public, being aware of signs of it and reporting it.

S3: Beside the authorities, every day people should be more aware of the signs of human trafficking that is around them but gaining more knowledge and understanding about the issue

S4: Greater awareness amongst the public, campaigns targeting traffickers

S5: Do not be secretive about our activities, interests so that you are more sociable with those you know. The truth shared can alert people earlier when you are not where and when you are expected to be present. also travel in groups more often, being is alone is overated if you are not in a safe place.

S6: Educate the public Announce it more

S7: Prayer to get a plan of action, becoming educated on the problem and listening to recommended solutions.

S8: Increased awareness and cooperation between governments of all nations on all levels

APPENDIX B

JOURNAL ENTRIES

Journal Entries

Week 1

S1: What does trafficking look like?

Trafficking often does not resemble what is depicted in movies and television. In reality is it can be a young person thinking they are making a genuine connection with someone their age via social media or on gamer forums, only discover that they have been baited for blackmail. It looks like a neighborhood massage polar that stays open late , only accepts male clients and offers sex as an up-charged service. And still trafficking could like two consensual adults agreeing on a price for sexual activities being orchestrated by a boyfriend/pimp. After listening to Susan Patterson in this first session it is clear to me that trafficking has many faces. This industry is very much organized, active and steady claiming victims. The way to counter act this ugly reality is one educate people or all ages and backgrounds on what is hidden in plain sight. By bringing awareness this can hinder new victims and save current ones. Laws need to change and action is required of citizen to not only be alert but also demand change within their community. The call to action is for the citizen and followers of Jesus Christ to get organized and abolish trafficking by working along side the victims , non- profit organizations, the law, and the community.

S2: Trafficking – Obtaining or maintaining the use of another person

Force, Fraud, Coersion

Labor Trafficking: Prostitution, massage parlors, clubs

Majority of pimps are gang leaders

Churches: How can we support the survivors?

Buyers are buying a fantasy

Repeat buyers responsible for 75% of sex buying

When prostitution is legalized, trafficking explodes.

Churches can do street outreach as opposed to police stings.

Victims: generally poor or in gang community

Working with Youth Pastors – prevention/support - How to be a trauma informed church

Whats working: 6 states – porn is a health hazard, 8 states- minors prohibited from porn as a health hazard. Dangers can be taught in school

S3: Human Trafficking Journal

9/4/24

Susan Patterson, subject matter expert

Definition: obtaining or maintaining the services of another person using force, fraud, coercion, etc. (confirm definition)

Some trick victims by sexual exploitation "Sextortion"

For sex trafficking, Adult victims have to prove force, fraud or coercion. Minors do not have to prove it.

For Labor trafficking, minors have to provide proof.

84% of prostitutes are victims of sex trafficking.

Majority of sex trafficking run by gangs. Street pimps are in minority of those running it.

50% of victims rescued return to prostitution, because they have no support system/community. This is where the church can help.

Victims frequently are in poor families, or domestic violence situations, etc.

Coffee houses, massage parlors, parties, are venues where buyers patronize prostitutes.

Appx. 6.2% of men buy sex. Repeat buyers are responsible for 75% of the buying. They average about $100k income/year.

Church has 2 roles: prevention and supporting victims. The church needs to be educated on how to be a "trauma-informed church."

Often when children have gone missing, many have become sex trafficking victims.

S4: Lack of love in home missing family stability

Social workers, family counseling, spiritual boldness gives us

confidence to walk in initiative to obedience to God's plan.

Addressing our neighbors

whatever we do to the least of these we do it unto the Lord.

Spend some time or give what you can. Open up, reach out and touch wanting nothing in return.

Manipulation in thre area of care and concern ways to draw those who are in need.

Any type of people can be victim or perpetrator and reinforcement with hugs, touch and words.

Our local area needs help in our own community

S5: September 4th Journal

Susan Patterson, the guest speaker for the first class gave us a lot to think about and a lot to digest. One thing she said that stands out to me is that this human trafficking is very organized, and that there are classmates (recruiters) that befriend other classmates and trap them into human trafficking. I never knew that school kids were also involved in the industry. I feel sadness for the victims, but what caused my heart to smile was when Susan played the video of the young lady that was a victim, and is now helping others to get rescued from this horrible life of human trafficking.

S7: 9/04/24 Susan Patterson

Really enjoyed this speaker. She shared so much eye-opening information.

It really rang true when she said “The faith community needs to stop reinventing the wheel.” So much time and resources are wasted when we step out alone instead of learning from and supporting the ongoing efforts of other churches and organizations.

Definition of Human Trafficking is defined differently by different communities. It’s a bit confusing to me. If certain actions don’t fit the specific definition of human trafficking, is it just abuse? Where is the line?

I was shocked to learn that traffickers make more money from males than females. Need to make sure boys are aware.

I’d never heard the term “Sextortion” and was surprised to learn it drives many young victims to commit suicide.

I’m not sure why labor trafficking not always considered human trafficking.

Prostitution is human trafficking but hard to prove. I think educating the victims and potential victims of human trafficking will be more effective than trying to prosecute the traffickers.

It’s surprising how trafficking of all kinds is so organized.

Week 2

S1: Do you believe the story of the Good Samaritan and the beaten man on the Jericho Road applies to the subject of human trafficking ? If so, how? If not, why not?

Yes, I believe the lesson that Jesus taught by telling the parable of the Good Samaritan does applies to human trafficking. The main message from said parable is to love thy

neighbor. These victims of human trafficking are our neighbors. As a follower of Christ Jesus , I know I was created in the image of God. I want to be sensitive and obedient to the Holy Spirit when as He leads me and requires me to love and show compassion to other people.So with that being said it is important for me to aid and assist those whom are around me in breakthrough and deliverance. Allowing them a chance to see and choose to live a life that God has called them to live.

S3: We often pass by those who are homeless, or asking for money, food or just help in general. We need to pray for wisdom and guidance in how to deal with these situations. Sometimes giving money isn't what is needed. We may have good intentions, but need God's guidance on what to do, and how to do it, when we are moved to help.

Regarding the video about Oree, a sex trafficking survivor: was born in a prison where her mother was serving time, was molested at age 8 by a family friend. Ran away, wound up in a drug house. Placed trust in a man who seemed to be concerned about her, she needed food and shelter. but he put her into sex trafficking. He brainwashed her into thinking she had no value. After about 4 years, at age 15, she was told she was a victim

Traffickers use social media to stalk potential victims. Now she works for Saving Innocence, working with kids on prevention of being victims of sex trafficking.

S5: September 11th Journal

I believe the story of the good Samaritan on the road to Jericho Road applies to the subject of human trafficking. First of all, those around us who are victims of human trafficking are our neighbors. In Matthew 22: 39, Jesus says to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. The man was wounded and laying helpless on the ground. And just as the priest and the Levite passed him by, we today do the same thing. We often represent the priest and the Levite, regardless of whether we feel as though we can justify why we pass others by or step over them. We as Christians are basically modern-day priests and Levites. The two that passed the wounded man may have been afraid, lazy, in a hurry, we don’t have time, or we just simply lack compassion for others. This represents a lot of us today. We must be honest with ourselves and ask God for compassion if we know we lack it. We must also ask God for boldness and spiritual discernment, so that we know who to help and who we should leave alone. Compassion I believe is the number one necessity so that we can help others in need even the victims of human trafficking.

S7: 9/11/24

Luke 10:25 – 37 The Good Samaritan

For me, the word neighbor implies community and connection. If you consider that we are all connected, as children of God then, it follows that we are all neighbors. In secular terms, we all share this planet and anything the affects a few of us could have an impact on many of us. If we help our neighbor, we are also helping ourselves.

Week 3

S1: How is the history of the Underground Railroad similar to the Anti-trafficking movement?

The is history of the underground railroad in America is similar to the anti-trafficking movement because they have the same mission to proved a safe passage for victims to obtain freedom from their capturers/traffickers with the help of those within the general population.

S3: Sex trafficking is modern-day slavery. Although it is illegal in every country, how is it that it is more prevalent today than ever?

Sex trafficking is also a form of 'cheap labor'. Rescuing victims can be compared to how the Underground Railroad brought so many slaves to freedom. There are resistance groups now as there were back in slavery days.

Guest speaker: Jean Stockdale, Program Director of Stillwaters National Human Trafficking Hotline

A law was passed by Congress "Trafficking Victims Protection Act," approx. year 2000. Made more consequences for people and companies that traffic. Jean gave an example of labor trafficking. People came to US from other countries, but were misled by recruiters that work opportunities they thought they came here for was good; but they were false promises. They were told bring their families, and they had to pay to reserve a spot to get a green card. Were told multiple times to pay, and some had to borrow money from friends/families, created debt entrapment. Recruiters held their passports once they came over. They were getting far below what they were promised, and far below what other workers were getting. They were basically held captive, under armed guard, not free to go anywhere except every 2 weeks went to Walmart to get personal care items.

Sex trafficking is a modern name for forced prostitution. Labor trafficking exploits/manipulates people into thinking they have good job opportunities, but they are not given the opportunities they were promised. Victims include both US citizens or those from foreign countries.

U.S. Citizens are also victims of sex and labor trafficking. They are eligible for assistance programs based on their citizenship. Those who were not citizens, did not have access to those benefits. SNAP benefits, Medicaid and other assistance.

Trafficking Victims Assistance Program. helps people get some assistance benefits while they were awaiting for their immigration status is grated by the government, so they can apply for government assistance benefits.

Jean is part of the NJ partner of Trafficking Victims Assistance Pgm. 1/3 of their clients are minors. Some were split up from parents by border patrol. This program is called the Aspire program, which is the version of this program for minors.

Jean's organization is connected to her church. Her church members help assist victims with medical needs, furniture, clothing, toys. They assist victims confidentially without disclosing they are victims.

NJ has a coalition against human trafficking that educates the public on this issue, how not to get mixed up with the wrong people, what to do if someone you know is being influenced by these predators.

S4: Jean Stockdale - speaker

- Services needed

- Consent form - signatures

- Historical President

  Illegal everywhere the historical underground railroad

- Labor/sex trafficking Congressman Chris Smith laws

  800 victims since 2010 - 2000 USA born or not

- Visas shorts on work with wonderful green card opts.

- Down payments requested to pay for opportunities more than what was originally promised.

- Debt entrapment (included crooked officials) and lies perpetrated. 590 pipefitters from India with deplorable conditions 24/7 work weeks for disabled US citizens

- Trafficking victims assistance program.

- NJ partner client out of NJ are under 18 - Aspire program for minors Adult T. Assistance program built on social network for good in this country.

- Housing for residential living but more importantly for nurturing victims.

- Air and B channel claiming large donation center for distribution of furniture, clothing, etc.

- NJ public outreach coalition for case workers managers (multi-lingual)

- Exploitation of employees is rampant in companies by all levels of workers.

- 7 times harder to escape domestic violence repeat offenders. Bridge builders help undo the isolation that keeps victims bound.

- It takes a long time to be mentally free without help.

- Few are directly greeted through referrals of sixteen agencies.

- Build much trust to garner success stories for freedom.

- 1 year budget for client and billable hours of agents

- Provide more needful tools for success from government instead of tools for war (homes).

HOW TO GET INVOLVED HELPING?

Write letters to expose the problems and what is needed to alleviate hinderances to victims getting the proper assistances.

Meet with people, spend time nurturing, loving, listening, praying in the meantime through various people, groups and family support. spend time intentionally.

S5: September 18 Journal Entry-

How is the history of the Underground Railroad similar to the trafficking industry?

Here we have Harriet Tubman and others actually, that risked their lives on a daily basis to rescue others from slavery and pointed them toward a better and safer life. And may I add that this was no easy fete. I am certain of that. I am sure that Harriet Tubman sacrificed much and gave up her comfort and her own way of life for the sake of others. And so it is today that there are also those who put their comfort, their own personal schedules, and their convenience on the back burner, and sometimes even risk their own lives to rescue others and to pull them out of the human trafficking industry where they probably once were and now rescuing others from a life of abuse, pain and heart ache. Those who take the time to rescue others from human trafficking are basically modern-day Harriet Tubman‘s.

S7: 9/18/24 Jean Stockton

Astounding to think that there are more slaves now than at any time in human history and creating avenues of escape for victims is similar to the creation of the Underground Railroad.

I wonder how big a role human trafficking plays in this country’s illegal immigrant problem. What percentage of current illegals came to the US through human trafficking? Have any lawsuits been successful in holding businesses accountable for labor trafficking?

It’s so wonderful how this church was perfectly positioned to do God’s will in helping human trafficking victims. It’s a blessing to have such a clear calling.

Week 4

S1: What are some ways traffickers lure their victims?

Traffickers lure their victims by; saying they have a job opportunity, by befriending them to gain their trust and even exploiting their debt so the victims have to work to pay it off.

S2:

Human Trafficking Focus Group – 9/25/2024 Journal Notes

Guest – Wincey Terry Bryant

Victims are often intimidated if they come forward with the truth of rape, incest, bullying.

Reference: Psalm 82:4

Human trafficking – taking place by Force, Coercion, Fraud

1) Force – selling someone into servitude
2) Coercion – persuasion to go into servitude based on threats, false promises
3) Fraud – promise of a job, labor; benefits that never get paid

Who is a victim? Youngest two years old, oldest as old as 76

Power domination and abuse

Familial trafficking – within a family

Low self-esteem of a victim is what predators look for

NJ is a hot spot because of a myriad of highways and varied means of transportation.

Great deal of trafficking happens online, within social media, video games

Related movies: “Hidden in Plain Sight” and “Tricked” - both on Netflix

S3: Wincey Terry-Bryant

"Traffic Jam" is her coalition

"Operation Christmas Morning" - pray for this rescue to be successful; rescuing a group of girls

In another case a pastor raped the victim, victim went public, and she is in hiding. Praying for victim's protection and peace.

In trafficking cases, cannot get a conviction without testimony and proof.

Victims are threatened/intimidated to not come forward.

Human Trafficking: force, coercion, fraud, power, domination, abuse $200 billion industry

Sex trafficking: can be prostitution; reported ages 2 years old through 76 years old.

Labor trafficking: promise of a job.

Familiar trafficking:

"Tricked" - documentary on Netflix. Pimps telling stories on how they get their victims; people with low self-esteem

Wincey's website

www.traffickjam.info

S4: Wednesday 9.25, 2024

Speaker Terry Bryant

Wincey Co. Actors, singers, etc. God's Frequency

[Forks in the Road]

- Operation Christmas Morning prayer Team text msg.

- Pastors involved sinfully bullying victim - Prayer

threats made on family Psalm 82:4 Rescue the needy

- Human trafficking methods - Labor and sexual force tricky, lies, coercion, family threats, fraudulent promises regarding prosperity modeling acting, glamourous jobs and help getting started, victims range in age from 2 - 70yrs. with power domination and abuse.

- Stayed or never tried to leave because of lack of family or friendly support. Better than home, family treatment.

- Uber Eats, school during the day, Highway transportation and black people are involved in obtaining victims. games are played behind the scenes. Higher resale value than drugs and guns for lucrative financial gain.

- Traffic Jam resource info needed

S7: Learned more about what human trafficking looks like in poor, black, urban areas. I understood Susan Patterson when she said black traffickers and pimps account for only a small percentage of the problem, nationwide and worldwide. This speaker helped me see that this small percentage is still a big issue in those communities. It's horrifying to learn about family members making money from abusing other family members and using essential services to facilitate trafficking. Scary to think that selling humans is more lucrative than selling guns or drugs. I'm now very aware of how much low self-esteem can contribute to creating a potential victim. The internet is changing the definition of the word stranger. I think it's so creative to use acting to communicate to children about this serious subject.

Week 5

S1: What I took away from this session was having compassion like the good Samaritan. Even though I may not be directly involved with these heinous cases in human trafficking I can still contribute towards a solution that will help the victims gain freedom. And to commit to doing my part to support the local , national and global organizations that are working towards that goal.

S3: 1st session: Comparison to "Good Samaritan."

Only one man on Jericho road showed compassion. Jesus made it clear that is what made that man different

Those involved in the fight against trafficking have a passion to get involved, find a solution, etc.

There's a difference between prostitution and a trafficking victim.

Ways traffickers recruit their victims:

- Perception of love; addressing a noticed lack of self-esteem

- Promise of financial gain

S4: Wednesday, Oct. 2, 2024:

Knowledge and Warriors

Tax evasion, health benefits, pay stubs, licensing for legalized prostitution business or not?

Clip shown - information recognized

COMPASSION demonstrated by the Good Samaritan

Phil. 2:13 Pastor Trawick

focus group 104,000 people learning to help and heal through taken time to listen by spending time looking for options to liberate rather than arrest or judge.

Task Force in Edison, NLC Commitment?

Months waiting for trust talk to children or

prospective clients. What is God Saying?

NLC Leadership for have had discussions regarding Fellowship and connections with each other to draw closer as a body of believers. The small group we have we do not seem to draw closer to each other. We do not greet the body with a hug, other opportunities to care for one another.

The people looking are more involved in the lives of the people they are looking to abuse.

S5: October 2 Journal Entry

Pastor Trawick, you asked the question (paraphrased) what causes people not to want to get involved in helping victims of human trafficking? I did find this question quite interesting, because there are so many reasons why people would not want to get involved in helping victims of human trafficking. To name a few, people tend to have their set schedules, and to move outside of that schedule would cause inconvenience in their day-to-day lives. People tend to be comfortable with how they structure their lives, and to move away from that normalcy can become quite uncomfortable, especially dealing with such a serious issue as human trafficking. But I do believe the most obvious two in my mind as to why people would not like to get involved in human trafficking, is due to fear of being exposed and harmed by the human traffickers and also complacency in life. (people don't prefer their lives to be uprooted in anyway whatsoever and their schedules to be changed or altered for the sake of someone else.) Getting involved with helping victims of human trafficking can become dangerous in some ways. Therefore, people are hesitant to get involved. But I would add, if someone feels hesitant or reluctant in getting involved because they feel it might be too dangerous, there are many other ways one can help and still make a difference in victims lives, such as donations, prayer, helping out behind the scenes with all the paperwork, I imagine must be processed for each victim in the offices of the organizations that help victims. An individual can also be one that does the research. Therefore gains knowledge on how to point victims in the right direction to revive help in their community. So you don't always have to be the one running into drug abandon buildings, knocking down doors to rescue someone because you suspect he/she is being trafficked. There is something for all of us to do to help make a difference in victims lives.

S7: So many crimes that could be considered human trafficking: child brides, organ harvesting, drug mules, child soldiers…

It's such a huge problem. Perhaps that's why there are so many different definitions for human trafficking, so the problems can be addressed, and resources allocated efficiently.

Human trafficking is not about greed. I see this problem is a consequence of lack, lack of resources, self-esteem, education, compassion and hope.

Week 6

S3: Guest Armand King, founder, consultant, keynote speaker.

grew up in San Diego, CA. Born 1981

was a gang member. Then a few years later became fascinated in pimping and prostitution around age 26

None of his 8 friends had a father in the house, no positive male role models. Pimping seemed lucrative financially, and get women.

Influenced by HBO special "Pimps Up, Hoes Down" and other movies, "celebrities," etc. that glorified pimping. Arrested on cannabis possession, served 3 years in prison, came out and had a big brother that helped him with a job. His brother died, other of his friends died, he wanted to make a change in his life.

Wrote book "Raised in Pimp City"

Root cause of pimping, trafficking, prostitution, drug sales, etc.:

Poverty, lack of opportunity

Today, many women hustling without a pimp, using "Only Fans," other social media vehicles to prostitute.

Armand's recommended solution: end poverty within the inner cities of the US. He knows it is not an easy solution. Provide the education/programs/resources. Early prevention, get to the kids early and educate them.

"Walkwithmeimpact.com" - his website, also points to YouTube videos. Is connected to two groups in his area that specialize in mental health. He refers people to those groups.

Also does Fentanyl awareness counseling.

S4:

Armand King - Speaker from San Diego, CA

10 yrs. born in '81 involved through the 90's

book "Walk with Me"

*Excellent view and prospective hit home from actual connections

of being directly involved in lifestyle that this activity has lived and survived on for our youths and communities all over the nation. Has transformed to lifestyle of prominence and power when it is being controlled what used to be the victim. Call girls, and also working with a partner

*Slavery. Potentates, Authorities abusing their power. Examples in the Bible. Part of slavery in America. Names change, rewards change but pretty much still same activity. Same behavior new name goals.

Raising Pimp city - Susan Peterson

Poverty

lack of opportunity

lack of Resources

Man that want to stop!

Curriculum - Youth prevention currently being used in schools

- morphed with social media

- woman on their own

- couples pimping in partnership

- hustles just to get paid

- pimping for relationship with no cookie-cutter style

The eyes of solutions - Mr. Kings view

- end poverty w/resources

- early prevention

- open truth - save lives

- Walk w/me impact - YouTube

- working on faith-base curriculum

Pastor Reid's input

- Mental health groups

- professional counseling for trauma

- healing opened wounds so you can help others

*Man that wants to stop doesn't mind taking advantage open relationships they still lie and cheat wanting to keep someone on the side while married or in a steady relationship

at the same time.

it seams that "flee fornication" does not mean that sex outside of marriage is a sin. It is only wrong if you get pregnant and on top of that you want to have an abortion.

* - are my thoughts

S5: Journal Entry, October 9, 2024

Amand King's life experiences with human sex trafficking was very enlightening. I never knew about human trafficking in this light before. The young school aged kids were simply influenced by the music and their pairs. They thought this way of living was cool. Several ways to deal with the issue of human trafficking:
A great way to to deal with this situation and dismantle this industry is to end poverty, provide proper resources for the kids, educate them on human trafficking, and early prevention.

I am not certain as to how promising it is to get rid of poverty. But one thing I do know is that God expects us to do what we can, and He will take care of the rest. We cannot rescue the whole world, but one thing you can do is be agents of change in our own communities.

S7: I found this speaker to be the most in touch with what's currently going on in the urban streets regarding the changing landscape of human trafficking. It's difficult to know who the criminals are when so many people have taken to selling themselves to earn a living. Is it really human trafficking if you're selling yourself? I think it is hard for people to believe that sometimes, there is no one behind the scenes, forcing people into this lifestyle. Is this a different, equally as disturbing problem that needs a different approach than we might use to help those who are truly being trafficked?

I understand now that the model of the pimp and having a stable of prostitutes is outdated and almost a comical stereotype of the way things used to be.

Who's the bad guy here? This is where I start to understand the need to start reaching out to the client, the consumer, the "John." Is there a way to affect this industry by shrinking the demand?

Week 7

S3: 10/23/24

Guest speaker: Gina Cavallo (sp), author "The Survivor Secrets"

NJ Coalition against human trafficking

V.P. Board of Trustees

Survivor of trafficking

Survivors go through victim blaming/victim shaming; victims don't always know they are a victim of this.

Traffickers torture & beat victims. Tell them how to walk, talk dress, etc.

The violence is used as psychological control. They don't have to use violence any longer after that.

Victims are threatened with being reported as illegal aliens, and then being deported. Someone shows interest in helping a person, but in reality they are trying to get close to influence them into being a victim.

Gina grew up in a home where there was abuse, and they felt it should not be talked about. So she became accustomed to it, and learned they weren't worth anything. Some of her older siblings were abusive to her.

Her dad physically abused her, causing her to land in the hospital, glass cuts. When her mother was asked by the doctor what happened, she said daughter closed the glass bathroom door too hard. Gina asked mother why dad hurt her, mother said he didn't hurt her, he loves her.

Another time a sibling molested her. Sibling said don't say anything, saying nobody would believe her.

She felt she had no purpose. Her main need was to have her family love and accept her. She left home, got a job at the airport in Florida, had a uniform, felt she was on the right road, felt she had a purpose, thought about going back home to show family how she progressed.

Made friends, met a man who she trusted and know her issues in the past. They became close, but he then made her a victim. He beat, drugged, and raped her. Stripped her of her dignity. She got to a point where he didn't have to beat her anymore. The drugs 'numbed' her, were kind of an escape from the pain. This lasted about 3 years.

She came home, met another guy, she told him of her past, but fell in love, got married. One day they had a bad argument, over her not wanting to go with him to his parents for Thanksgiving. He went, and told his parents about her past. They told him to divorce her, or they would disown him.

After divorce, she increased use of drugs and alcohol.

In 2016, her son-in-law, a pastor, started "Celebrate Recovery," a ministry, similar to Alcoholics Anonymous. A faith-based program, had a 12-step program similar to AA.

She initially only wanted to make coffee for the group, but wouldn't start the program for herself, thinking she didn't need it. Initial meetings she acted as a spectator, then decided to get more involved and follow the program. Then memories of her past flooded her, she stopped going to the program. Then she came back, and decided to face her past and start her healing journey. She had to "move out of her own way" so she was not in God's way. She had to surrender, and has been blessed ever since.

She was offered a lucrative speaking engagement, but was asked to tell her story without mentioning God. She refused the engagement, saying nobody can tell her what to do or say anymore.

Gina has heard stories about victims from 8 years old to 78 years old.

Gina said "The Sound of Freedom" movie was "off-center"; didn't reflect reality. I don't remember much more about why she felt that way.

Week 8

Conclusion Meeting Only – No journal notes requested

APPENDIX C

POST-SURVEY RESULTS

Post-Survey Results

Q1: What have you learned about human trafficking that you didn't know before?

S1: Age range of victims Various methods of enticing victims

S2: It is well organized, not specific to one race/culture. Massage parlors, coffee houses and parties often masquerade as trafficking occurs. Prostitute's clientele average about $100/year. Several organizations are actively trying to address this problem, such as Stillwaters National Human Trafficking Hotline, Trafficking Victims Assistance Program, Saving Innocence, Traffick Jam, NJ Coalition Against Human Trafficking, and others I also was not aware there was a Trafficking Victims Protection Act.

S3: The process to acquire victims who are girls and boys of all ages. How long this has been going on and that I could have been a victim as I look over my travels in life. Humans are trafficked for labor and sex all over the world, even in our backyard.

S4: Human trafficking is not just children targeted or sex-related.

S5: How widespread and organized it is. How hard it is to help those caught in it. How they use psychology to target and keep them bound. That in spite of overwhelming odds and danger, they are those out there saving and spreading the word about it.

S6: I was not aware that young students in grade school are actively involved in recruiting the classmates and becoming involved in human sex trafficking. I always thought it was an adult victimizing, a hopeless child… Pulling them into a car, grabbing them from the mall parking lot, snatching them up from inside a grocery store, etc.

Q2: Have you ever found yourself "victim blaming" trafficking victims? If so, what do you believe now? Why?

S1: Unsure

S2: Fortunately, I have not, only because if not by the grace of God, my friends, loved ones, or I could be victims.

S3: No, I have not been "victim-blaming." I have never encountered anyone that may have been a victim.

S4: No. I had empathy and compassion for those who a victims of human trafficking.

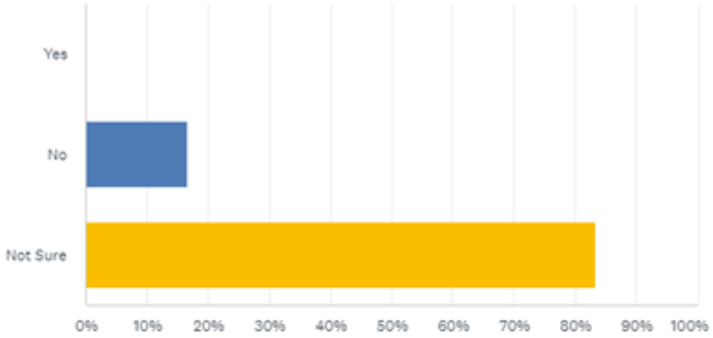
S5: No

S6: No, I never found myself a victim-blaming trafficking victims. Some of the victims have made some unwise decisions as to why they are where they are caught up in this terrible industry, but for the most part, I do not believe anyone truly wants to be stuck in these types of situations. And although some have made some unwise decisions, no one deserves to be treated the way these victims are treated.

Q3

Based on what you have learned, is it possible that you have recently seen a trafficking victim?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	0.00%	0
No	16.67%	1
Not Sure	83.33%	5
TOTAL		6

Q4: If so, what have you noticed that leads you to suspect this?

S1: This local massage parlor having late operation hours and the overall appearance of the place seems to be very much a front.

S2: Unsure, but some of the behaviors of victims I've learned about in these sessions make me suspicious of the possibility. A former coworker seemed to bounce from one residence to another, last known residence was in a motel. She seemed nervous/hyperactive, at times dressed 'scantily', and frequently wanted to borrow money.

S3: Blank

S4: N/A

S5: N/A

S6: N/A

Q5: If you have recently seen a victim or a trafficker, what should you do about it?

S1: Call trafficking hotline, Alert authorities if they are nearby

S2: First pray. Then contact one of the agencies we learned about to get direction on what to do next.

S3: keep my eyes open, gathering as much info as possible and call 911.

S4: Make contact with the person (a simple hello and a friendly smile). Pray for the person. If person is willing direct them to some local resources that can help them.

S5: Not sure. Missed that

S6: Try to pay attention to the description of the victim and the perpetrator then call 911 or if they are walking into a vehicle. See if you can discreetly get the license plate.

Q6: In what ways can you help someone that has just come out of trafficking?

S1: Be a means of support through open door conversation, offer transportation to church, basic needs

S2: Not be judgmental, reinforce their potential contributions to society, pray for them, pray with them. Ask if they are aware of some of the organizations we learned about that help victims/recovering victims.

S3: I would listen be open and share to gain trust and see what thay need along the process of healing.

S4: I can listen to their experiences. And encourage them to keep moving in their new freedom.

S5: Give them acceptance with God's love. Validate them as worthy of care. Help provide their physical needs and not judge them for expressing negative emotions.

S6: I can help by obtaining knowledge as to where I can safely point victims in the right direction in terms of organizations and facilities that will be able to assist them.

Q7: What can your city do to combat human trafficking?

S1: Bring awareness through posting, outreach events, police promoting information sessions

S2: City elected officials can publicize the issue and make it part of their platform. Churches, community and recreation centers can publicize the issue with posters, guest speakers, creation of ministries/task forces. Educate citizens and law enforcement on existing organizations, invite them to speak at gatherings.

S3: support in every way possible by changing laws for perpetrators as high up on the ladder as possible, providing housing and counseling, school and jobs.

S4: Be educated. Be alert. Be organized.

S5: Not at that session. Cannot access the past recordings.

S6: My city can sound the alarm and bring more awareness, education, and build more organizations that can assist victims and help them become more productive individuals in the community.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alchin, Linda. *The Underground Railroad Symbols*. Siteseen Limited, Surrey, UK, 2017. https://www.american-historama.org/1829-1841-jacksonian-era/underground-railroad-symbols.htm.

Alleman, Andrew. *Christianity: A History of Charity and Compassion.* Minneapolis, MN: Self-Evident Ministries, 2024.

Anderson, Leith. *Dying For Change*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1990.

Aquinas, Thomas. *The* "*Summa Theologica" of St. Thomas Aquinas: Index to Biblical, Patristic and Other Authorities Quoted in the "Summa Theologica*." New York, NY: Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd.: Benziger Bros., 1925.

Beach, Waldo, and H. Richard Niebuhr, eds. *Christian Ethics: Sources of the Living Tradition. New York, NY: Ronald Press Co., 1955.*

Bennis, Warren, and Nanus. *Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge*. New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1985.

Berkley, J. D., ed. *The Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997.

Bible Hub. "Luke 10:35." Accessed January 20, 2023. https://biblehub.com/luke/10-35.htm.

Binder, Evan. "Getting out of Traffic: Applying White Collar Investigative Tactics to Increase Detection of Sex Trafficking Cases." *Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology* 112, no. 3 (Summer 2022): 631–64.

Blackaby, Henry. *Spiritual Leadership*. Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2001.

Blanchard, Ken, and Hodges, Phil. *Lead Like Jesus: Lessons from the Greatest Leadership Role Model of All Time*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2008.

Bolivar, Daniela. "For *Whom* Is Restorative Justice? *A Mixed-Methods Study on Victims and (Non-)Participation.*" Santiego, CL: Restorative Justice. https://doi.org/1.10.5235/20504721.1.2.190.

Bowron, Bernard R., and Earl Conrad. “Harriet Tubman.” *The New England Quarterly* 17, no. 1 (1944): 122. https://doi.org/10.2307/362006.

Breyfogle, William. *Make Free: The Story of the Underground Railroad.* Philadelphia, PA: David A. Hamilton Americana Books, 1958.

Britannica. “Fugitive Slave Acts.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Last modified October 21, 2022. https://www.britannica.com/event/Fugitive-Slave-Acts.

British Broadcasting Corporation. “Modern Slavery.” *BBC*, March 31, 2022. https://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/slavery/modern/modern_1.shtml.

Brown, Tyson. “Caravanserai.” *National Geographic*, December 5, 2024. https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/caravanserai/.

Burke, H. Dale. *How to Lead and Still Have a Life*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2005.

Burris, R. “Another Look at the Good Samaritan: Luke 10:25–37. *Review & Expositor* 114, no. 3 (2017): 457–61. https://doi.org.dtl.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/0034637317721983.

Calarco, Tom. *People of the Underground Railroad: A Biographical Dictionary*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2008.

Callahan, Kennon L. *Effective Church Leadership*. New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1990.

Calvin, Jean, John T. McNeill, and Ford Lewis Battles. *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion.* Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.

Chafer, Lewis Sperry. *Systematic Theology, Vols. 3 & 4*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1993.

Chia, Roland. “God and the Victim.” *Ethos Institute for Public Christianity*, March 3, 2015. https://ethosinstitute.sg/god-and-the-victim/.

Chodron, Pema. *The Places That Scare You: A Guide to Fearlessness in Difficult Times.* Boulder, CO*:* Shambhala Classics, 2002.

Clinton, J. Robert. *The Making of the Leader*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1988.

Collins, James C. *From Good to Great*. New York, NY: HarperBusiness, 2001.

———, and Jerry I. Porras. *Built to Last*. New York, NY: HarperBusiness, 1994.

Collins, Mary E., Sarah Garlington, and Kate Cooney. “Relieving Human Suffering: Compassion in Social Policy.” *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare* 42, no. 1 (2015).

Covey, Stephen R. *First Things First*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1995.

———. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1989.

Denny, Micheala. "Victim Blaming: The Invisible Force Holding Back Sex Trafficked Individuals. *Voices for Florida*, April 26, 2023.

DeWitt Proctor, Samuel. *Samuel Proctor: My Moral Odyssey*. Judson Press, 1989.

Douglass, Frederick. *The Fugitive Slave Law: Speech to the National Free Soil Convention in Pittsburgh, August 11, 1852*. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester, Frederick Douglass Project, 2018. http://www.lib.rochester.edu/index.cfm?PAGE=4385.

Drucker, Peter F. *The Effective Executive*. New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1985.

Farrell, Amy, Jack McDevitt, and Stephanie Fahy. *Understanding and Improving Law Enforcement Responses to Human Trafficking: Final Report*. Boston, MA: Northeastern University Institute on Race and Justice, 2008.

Foot, Kristen. *Collaborating Against Human Trafficking: Cross-Sector Challenges and Practices.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016.

Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Translated by Joan Riviere. New York, NY: Jonathan Cape & Harrison Smith, 1930.

Gangel, Kenneth O. *Feeding and Leading*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1989.

Gara, Larry. *The Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1961. http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt2jcgg8.

Gardner, John W. *Excellence*. New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1961.

Gavrielides, T. *Restorative Justice Theory and Practice: Addressing the Discrepancy*. Helsinki, FI: European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, 2007. http://www.heuni.fi/uploads/8oiteshk6w.pdf.

George, Abraham. "Human Trafficking and the Response of the Global Church." *The Lausanne Movement*, January 2014. https://lausanne.org/content/lga/2014-01/human-trafficking-and-the-response-of-the-global-church.

George, Carl F. *Preparing Your Church for the Future*. Tarrytown, NY: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1991.

Harriet Tubman Historical Society. "What Was the Underground Railroad?" 2023. http://www.harriet-tubman.org/underground-railroad.

Heath, Chip, and Dan Heath. *Made to Stick*. New York, NY: Random House, 2007.

Hendricks, Howard, and William Hendricks. *As Iron Sharpens Iron*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1985.

Hewitt, N. A. *Radical Friend: Amy Kirby Post and Her Activist Worlds*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2018.

Hilliard, Donald Jr. *Church Growth from an African American Perspective*. King of Prussia, PA: Judson Press, 2006.

Hussemann, Jeanette, Colleen Owens, Hanna Love, Lilly Yu, Evelyn McCoy, Abbey Flynn, and Kyla Woods. *Bending Towards Justice: Perceptions of Justice among Human Trafficking Survivors.* Washington, DC: Office of Justice Programs' National Criminal Justice Reference Service, 2018.

Hyde, Douglas. *Dedication and Leadership*. South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966.

Joy to the World Foundation. "5 Organizations Fighting Human Trafficking." *Joy to the World Foundation Thailand*, 2023. https://www.joytotheworldthailand.org/organizations-fighting-human-trafficking.

Keirsey, David, and Marilyn Bates. P*lease Understand Me: Character and Temperament Types*. Del Mar, CA: Prometheus Books, 1984.

King, Martin Luther, Jr. "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence." Speech delivered at Riverside Church, New York, NY, April 4, 1967. *American Rhetoric*. https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkatimetobreaksilence.htm.

Kotter, John P. *A Force for Change*. New York, NY: The Free Press, 1990.

Kouzes, James M., and Barry Z. Posner. *The Leadership Challenge*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1987.

LaHaye, Tim. *Spirit-Controlled Temperament*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1966.

Malphurs, Aubrey M. *Developing a Vision For Ministry*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1992.

Manchester, William. *The Last Lion: Winston Spencer Churchill, 1874–1932, Visions of Glory*. New York, NY: Dell Publishing Company, 1984.

Marshall, C. "The Underground Railroad." *School Library Journal* 47 (2001): 29–31.

McGraw, Marie Tyler. *Researching and Interpreting the Underground Railroad*. Washington, DC: National Park Service, US Department of the Interior, 1997. https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/ugrr/exugrr2.htm.

Merida, Tony. *Ordinary: How to Turn the World Upside Down.* Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2015.

Muck, Terry. *When to Take a Risk: A Guide to Pastoral Decision Making*. Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today, 1987.

Nagy, Rosemary. *Transitional Justice: Nomos Li*. Edited by Melissa S. Williams and Jon Elster, New York, NY: New York University Press, 2012. *ProQuest eBook Central*. https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.dtl.idm.oclc.org/lib/dtl/detail.action?docID=865431.

Nanus, Burt. *Visionary Leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1992.

National Human Trafficking Hotline, "Human Trafficking," accessed 12 December, 2023, https://humantraffickinghotline.org/en/type-trafficking/human-trafficking.

National Institute of Justice. "For Human Trafficking Survivors, Justice Is More About Healing and Preventing Future Trafficking." *National Institute of Justice*, Washington, DC 2021. https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/human-trafficking-survivors-justice-more-about-healing-and-preventing-future.

Nix, J., and S. E. Wolfe. "Sensitivity to the Ferguson Effect: The Role of Managerial Organizational Justice." Journal of Criminal Justice 47 (2016): 12–20. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2016.06.002.

Nouwen, Henri J. M. *In the Name of Jesus*. La Vergne, TN: Crossroads Publishing Company, 1989.

Osborne, Larry W. *The Unity Factor*. Carol Stream, IL: Word Publishing Company, 1989.

Patterson, Susan. *How You Can Fight Human Trafficking*. Irvine, CA: Through God's Grace Ministry, 2014.

———. *The Role of the Church in Ending Human Trafficking*. Irvine, CA: Through God's Grace Ministry, 2023.

Peters, Alicia W. *Responding to Human Trafficking: Sex, Gender, and Culture in the Law*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015.

Pettit, Eber. *Sketches in the History of the Underground Railroad*. New York, NY: Open Road Integrated Media, 2015.

Pinsker, Matthew. "The Underground Railroad and the Coming of War." *The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History*, 2009. https://ap.gilderlehrman.org/essay/underground-railroad-and-coming-war.

Polaris Project. *How Human Trafficking Happens*. Accessed July 10, 2020. https://polarisproject.org/how-human-traffickinghappens/.

Real Escape from the Sex Trade. "Five Ways Love Heals Exploitation." *REST Blog*, Seattle, WA, 2009. https://iwantrest.com/blog/five-ways-love-heals-exploitation.

Rhodes, Kirby Laura. "Procedural Justice and Police Officers: The Forgotten Perspective." Master's thesis, University of Mississippi, 2018. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2018.

Richie-Zavaleta, A. C., A. M. Villanueva, L. M. Homicile, and L. A. Urada. "Compassionate Care—Going the Extra Mile: Sex Trafficking Survivors' Recommendations for Healthcare Best Practices." *Sexes* 2 Vol. 1 (2021): 26–49. https://doi.org/10.3390/sexes2010003.

Sadler, Raleigh. "Living in the Light of the Good Samaritan: Giving Value to the Devalued." *Let My People Go*, July 8, 2013. https://raleighsadler.com/blog/2013/07/08/living-in-light-of-the-good-samaritan-giving-value-to-the-devalued.

Sanders, J. Oswald. *Spiritual Leadership*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1986.

Schaller, Lyle. *Getting Things Done: Concepts and Skills for Leaders*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1986.

Searle, Joshua T. *Theology After Christendom: Forming Prophets for a Post-Christian World*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018.

Seth, Vikram. *A Suitable Boy.* New York, NY: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2005.

Smith, Fred. *Learning to Lead*. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1985.

Spencer, Andrew J. "A Brief History of Mercy Ministry in the Church, Part 3." *Ethics & Culture Blog*, January 10, 2015. http://www.ethicsandculture.com/blog/2015/1/10/a-brief-history-of-mercy-ministry-in-the-church-part-three.

Stanley, Paul D., and J. Robert Clinton. *Connecting: The Mentoring Relationships You Need to Succeed in Life*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1992.

Stein, R. C., & Taylor, C. *The Underground Railroad*. New York, NY: Enslow Publishing, LLC, 2015.

Still, William. *The Underground Railroad*. Chicago, IL: Johnson Publishing Company, 1970.

Struckmeyer, Kurt, *A Conspiracy of Love: Following Jesus in a Postmodern World*. Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2016. https://followingjesus.org/compassion-in-action-charity-service-and-justice/.

Tertullian, Minucius Felix. *Apology. De Spectaculis. Minucius Felix.* Translated by T. R. Glover and Gerald Henry Rendall. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, Heinemann, 1966.

Thompson, Glen L. *Christian Compassion Through the Centuries.* Mequon, WI: Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, 2022.

Tyler, T. R. *Why People Obey the Law*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006.

Underground Railroad Education Center. "Key People." Accessed 19 December, 2023. https://undergroundrailroadhistory.org/key-people/.

United States Congress. *Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000*. Public Law 106-386. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2000.

United States Office of Justice Programs. *An Ongoing Commitment to Victims of Human Trafficking*. Washington, DC: Office for Victims of Crime, 2021.

Van Ek, Jacob. "Underground Railroad in Iowa." *The Palimpest* (May 1921): 142–43.

Vine, W. E., Merrill F. Unger, and William White. *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words.* Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1985.

Voges, Ken R. and Mike Kempainen. *Understanding Jesus: A Personality Profile*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1992.

Wagner, Tricia Martineau. *It Happened on the Underground Railroad: Remarkable Events That Shaped History*. 2nd ed. Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2014.

Walker, Lorenn. "Restorative Justice: Definition and Purpose." In *Restorative Justice Today: Practical Applications*, edited by Lorenn Walker, 3–14. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2013. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452244228.

Wessel, Susan. *On Compassion, Healing, Suffering, and the Purpose of the Emotional Life*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020.

Working Preacher, St. Paul, MN: Luther Seminary, 2022. https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/ordinary-15-3/commentary-on-luke-1025-37-5.

Youssef, Michael. *The Leadership Style of Jesus*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1986.

Yu, Lilly, Jeanette Hussemann, Hanna Love, Evelyn McCoy, and Colleen Owens. *Alternative Forms of Justice for Human Trafficking Survivors.* Washington, DC: Urban Institute Justice Policy Center, 2018. https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/97341/alternative_forms_of_justice_for_human_trafficking_survivors.pdf.

Zehr, H. *Changing lenses: A new focus for crime*. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1990.

Zizek, Slavoj, Eric L. Santner, and Kenneth Reinhard. *The Neighbor: Three Inquiries in Political Theology*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2005.